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The Week

THE Republican convention last week followed the expected course by choosing Governor Alfred M. Landon of Kansas as its presidential nominee. Senator Arthur Vandenberg of Michigan having managed with some difficulty to avoid the vice-presidential nomination, that honor was given to Colonel Frank Knox, ultra-conservative publisher of The Chicago Daily News and former Hearst employee. The platform was the usual jumble of inconsistencies and evasions, designed to catch the votes of the largest possible number of disparate and even mutually hostile groups. In certain features it paid the New Deal the compliment of imitation and thereby exhibited a degree of liberal-

ism that no one would have dared to predict four years ago. In general, however, the platform looks backward. It reverses the historic position of the Republican Party by calling for states' rights. It praises the reactionary attitude of the Supreme Court and is not materially bettered by Governor Landon's personal reservation demanding a constitutional amendment to protect wages, hours and working conditions for women and children if it proves impossible to control these matters through the states.

WHILE the Republican convention was in progress President Roosevelt in a speech during his Southwestern tour repudiated the idea that any amendment of the Constitution is now required, in view of the attitude of the Supreme Court. All that is necessary, he argued, is a reinterpretation of the Constitution—without saying how the conservative majority of the Court is to be persuaded to this point of view. Meanwhile, the country received an object lesson in power politics as the Treasury prepared to distribute nearly \$2,000,000,000 as the final cash payment on the bonus to 3,500,000 former soldiers. As everyone had expected, all countries owing the United States payments on war debts again defaulted with the exception of Finland, whose obligation is so small that it can be handled without serious difficulty. The Michigan investigation of the Black Legion revealed further ramifications of that order, including reports of terroristic measures used to compel employers in steel and automobile plants to hire legionnaires and to blackball those it opposed—which of course means union members and all others suspected of "radicalism." The Georgia Supreme Court upheld the chain-gang sentence of Angelo Herndon, convicted under an anti-insurrection law passed in 1866 to meet the special conditions following the Civil War.

SOVIET RUSSIA has announced the terms of its proposed new Constitution. The suggested plan, ratification of which is a foregone conclusion, is a vast step toward political democracy without, however, altering the economic democracy which the Russian leaders of course regard as being far more important. In future, Russia will be governed through a bicameral legislature; full civil liberties are restored to all persons formerly considered class

enemies, and there is universal suffrage for all those who are above the age of eighteen. This unprecedented good news from the U.S.S.R. is in sharp contrast to most other items in the week's budget from abroad. The British government has definitely decided to abandon the policy of sanctions against an aggressor, which signifies, of course, that the League will be forced to do the same. If this meant that in future the moral influence of the League would be relied upon, the change would not seem a disaster, since the Italo-Ethiopian affair demonstrated the ineffectiveness of sanctions under present conditions. Unfortunately, the British change of policy means on the contrary the virtual abandonment of the League as an instrument for peace and a frank return to the policy, never really repudiated, of rule by force, through a system of alliances—the system that is heading straight toward another World War. In China, the Cantonese government indulged in demonstrations against Japan, the avowed purpose of which was to force Nanking to a policy of resistance. But in China, things are seldom what they seem, and many observers believe the gesture had more to do with aggrandizement for the Canton dictator, General Chen Chia-tang, than with patriotic ardor against a foreign foe. In France, the series of strikes which a fortnight ago involved a million workers, is rapidly being liquidated. The country's financial difficulties, augmented by the flight of capital, continue serious, however, and it is generally expected that another devaluation of the franc must take place. Naval negotiations between Great Britain and Soviet Russia have made progress: the Russians have agreed that their fleet in the Pacific is not to exceed the British strength in those quarters unless Japan should enlarge her tonnage.

THE British Cabinet has at last taken the necessary decision to abandon sanctions against Italy, and, having done this, it cannot pretend that sanctions will be effective in the future. A revision of the League Covenant is therefore in order. The London Times reverses its former position, declaring, "It would be absurd merely to intimate to Italy that there was an end to 'sanctions' in her own particular case while retaining the obligation to impose them against some other breaker of the peace." But it would be a mistake to assume that this change of policy on the part of the British government merely registers the failure of a scientific experiment. It is a reaction to the necessities of *Realpolitik*. Italy must either be fought or conciliated; the decision has swung in favor of conciliation because of the menace of Germany. The British hope to conserve Mussolini as an ally against Hitler. Alfred Duff Cooper, War Secretary, stated in a speech that "The situation in Europe is far worse than it was in 1914. . . . It is the duty of those in authority to frighten the people of this country out of their wits." The old system of alliances looms, and war beyond it.

THIS year, the Republican ticket is a Hearst product. Colonel Knox, the vice-presidential candidate, was long an employee of the Lord of San Simeon and shares most of the more undesirable views of that gentleman. Governor Landon is also a Hearst candidate. At the beginning of his campaign for the nomination he was visited at Topeka by the publisher, accompanied by several members of his court, and anyone more than three years old could see that they came to an understanding. Landon's only bad defeat in any state primary was in California, where the Hearst link was most clearly in evidence. In the past, Hearst's support has given many candidates the kiss of death. His readers have a long record of perusing Mr. Hearst's frenzied appeals for Candidate A and then rushing to the polls to vote for Candidate B. It is problematic whether Mr. Landon is wise, even on a completely opportunistic basis, to accept Hearst's support and, by his silence, to permit the deduction that he agrees with the Hearst policies.

JUSTICE is a foolish word in Georgia, where the Supreme Court has again upheld the conviction of Angelo Herndon. Almost four years ago now he was arrested for leading an unemployed demonstration, and finally convicted under a law passed in 1866 to prevent slave uprisings. This law, if it is thus interpreted, denies the rights of free speech and freedom of assembly, as well as the right to possess any material a jury may interpret to be of an "inflammatory" or "incendiary" nature. He was sentenced to eighteen to twenty years on the chain gang, which is equivalent, as he himself says, to "death by torture." Since then the case has been through many courts, even to the Supreme Court of the United States, which ruled, on a technicality, that it had no jurisdiction, and one discerning judge has declared the law unconstitutional. But Georgia's Supreme Court has ordered Herndon to serve his sentence. The International Labor Defense will apply for a stay of execution pending appeal to the United States Supreme Court again.

PRESIDENT Frederick B. Robinson, the Red-baiting, umbrella-wielding dictator of the College of the City of New York, has emerged with a neat coat of whitewash applied by the Board of Higher Education. A special investigating committee set up by the Board found no grounds for requesting Dr. Robinson's removal and inferentially cleared him of blame by widening the investigation to include deans, department heads and other ranking administrative officers in an effort to find the reasons for the prevalence of student and staff difficulties. Even so soft-spoken a committee as this one, however, recommended that Dr. Robinson's powers, especially in matters of discipline, be reduced. A number of cases, notably that of Morris Schappes, in which attempts were made to bring about the discharge or reduction in rank of faculty members of several years' experience, are still pending before

the Board. Regardless of the outcome of these cases, Dr. Robinson retains his presidency. He stays in office by reason of the votes of reactionary political appointees to the Board of Higher Education, which the present Fusion administration inherited from its predecessors. Mayor LaGuardia should give careful thought to the naming of two new members of the Board on July 1.

STOP using kid gloves on these strikers and swing your clubs." These were the instructions given by Chief Thomas Carroll to the Syracuse police last week for dealing with the employees of the Remington Rand Company who were in the third week of a strike involving a total of 6,000 workers in six cities. Chief Carroll was apparently anxious to prove that his men could succeed where several hundred of Bergoff's finest strikebreakers had failed, but for some strange reason the company decided on other tactics. It announced that it would scrap its plants at Syracuse, New York, Middletown, Connecticut, and Norwood, Ohio—thus throwing several thousands out of work—and increase its operations elsewhere, chiefly at its Ilion, New York, plant where the strike has been broken with the aid of a citizens' vigilante committee that drove strikers from the picket line. The company has had an agreement with its employees since 1934, the result of a successful strike of the Office Equipment Employees' Union. On the basis of the recent Guffey coal decision, however, the management apparently decided that the Wagner Act and collective bargaining would be declared unconstitutional and that, hence, it would be safe to bust the union. Such is the labor policy of a corporation whose profits last year were 72 percent greater than the year before.

ON THE same night that Herbert Hoover was delivering his valedictory to the Republican convention, President Roosevelt was in Arkansas speaking sweet nothings to the local electorate. In his most ingratiating vein the President spoke of the rivers and parks and wonderful people of Arkansas and clasped to his rhetorical bosom the local political leaders, Senator Joe Robinson and Governor J. Marion Futrell. With justifiable sharpness, Norman Thomas telegraphed the President to remind him that he was speaking at the "centenary celebration of a state which has not yet abolished slavery in its cotton fields." This drew from Senator Robinson and Governor Futrell a joint statement in which they laid Arkansas' troubles to "agitators who misrepresent both conditions and results." In the face of a long series of brutal beatings, murders, home-burnings, illegal arrests and organized terrorism against workers carried on by planter-inspired mobs and sympathetic authorities, this explanation seems something less than adequate. If the President had forsworn handshaking and vote-getting long enough to investigate the plight of one of the most oppressed groups in America, he would have found plenty to see and say and do in Arkansas.

Mr. Facing-All-Ways

THE FIRST impression of the Republican platform and candidate is that they were chosen to serve two diametrically opposed purposes: first to hold all those who oppose the present administration, by vigorous denunciation of what it has done; second, to attract many of those who support the present administration, by promising to do much the same things it has done—though by more efficient methods. This is good election-winning politics, but what it portends in action, if the Republicans should win the election, is more difficult to say.

The denunciation is largely in general terms; the imitation in specific ones. In general, the government is accused of having destroyed the liberties of the people, Congress of having invaded the rights of the states and flouted the Supreme Court, the President of having usurped the powers of Congress, all of having indulged in waste, corruption and dishonor. Investigations, regulations, etc., etc., are denounced. Specifically, however, the platform pledges the party to spend federal money for relief, old-age pensions and unemployment insurance, to build public works, to protect labor's right to organize and bargain collectively, to push a program of land utilization, conservation and flood control, to pay subsidies to farmers, to fight against private monopoly, to sanction the devalued dollar and stabilize international exchanges at the proper time, to regulate business as much as necessary, to pass minimum-wage and maximum-hour laws for women and children, and so forth.

Obviously it is futile to examine further this major contradiction in order to find out the direction the Republicans intend to take. The platform resembles the wrapping on a patent-medicine bottle, advertised to cure everything at once, including high blood pressure and low blood pressure. Perhaps we shall get further if we examine the specific promises that are most emphasized, those about which most is likely to be heard during the campaign.

Landon's chief claim to favor is of course supposed to be that he is a budget-balancer. The platform proposes to balance the budget, calling attention to the fact that a balanced budget is the primary requirement for a sound currency. It definitely and concisely promises to do this "not by increasing taxes but by cutting expenditures, drastically and immediately." At the same time the platform pledges to make grants-in-aid to the states for unemployment relief, for old-age pensions and for other purposes, and to pay benefits to farmers on the domestically consumed portion of their crops "in order to make the tariff effective." It promises to raise the money to do such things, not by borrowing but by direct taxation, on the basis of a pay-as-you-go policy. Incidentally it favors "an army and navy, including

air forces, adequate for our national defense." Republicans certainly mean by this a bigger fighting force than at present.

We doubt if the higher mathematicians of big business itself could figure out how these various policies can be reconciled. To balance the budget, not by tax increases but by cutting expenditures, means spending about \$3,000,000,000 a year less than at present. Where will the money come from for unemployment relief, social insurance, farmers' benefits, larger armament? None of these things was in the budget when last it was balanced. Our guess as to what all this will really mean in action is (a) relief cut to the bone, making it even less adequate than at present, and subject to the cruelty and corruption of local politicians; (b) expenditures financed by substantial increases of sales taxes, tariffs and other indirect taxation bearing most heavily on the poor; (c) a budget still at least partially unbalanced unless or until prosperity returns. Thus all the relevant promises will be broken.

Next to budget-balancing, the most prominent feature of the Republican bid for favor is the promise to solve unemployment and provide security for all by encouraging private, competitive business to produce more. The formulas for achieving this end are: to remove restrictions on production, to abandon all New Deal policies that "raise production costs, increase the cost of living and thereby restrict buying, reduce volume and prevent reemployment," to withdraw government from competition with private business, to eliminate "unnecessary and hampering regulations" and to destroy private monopoly by vigorous enforcement of criminal and civil laws. In other words, a thoroughgoing policy of laissez-faire, in the interest of the orthodox economic theory that competitive private enterprise is the regime best fitted to produce abundance and maintain stability. But in other sections the platform advocates government interference with the "natural" economic processes by a policy of tariff protection for industry and agriculture. The tariff has of course been one of the great bulwarks of business monopoly. And the puzzle remains how the government is to destroy monopoly and restore effective competition without harassing business by prosecutions, investigations, regulation, taxation aimed against size, or public competition.

Economic history proves that business, if let alone, will of its own initiative restrict production in the interest of profit, that it will do its best to create one form or another of monopoly. The restrictions of output sanctioned by government in the N.R.A. were only extensions of existing business practices. The only "raising of production costs" to which the platform can refer is the enforcement of higher minimum wages, in the interest of a fairer distribution of income. And the restriction of agricultural output under the A.A.A. was a means of putting at the disposal of agriculture the same profit-seeking mechanism that much of indus-

try already practised. What the Republicans will probably do, therefore, is to remove whatever legal safeguards the New Deal has tried to extend to farmers and workers, without really forcing business to compete effectively. We are certain (a) that a Republican administration would not try to break up big business, (b) that even if it did try, it would not succeed in eliminating harmful price and production controls, (c) that no amount of competition that can be enforced will suffice to bring an economy of abundance and stability. This part of the platform is in practice a veil for an effort to restore complete power to the private dictators of industry.

Finally we come to the heart of the whole matter—the status and powers of government itself. The very first pledge is "to maintain the American system of constitutional and local self-government, and to resist all attempts to impair the authority of the Supreme Court of the United States, the final protection of the rights of our citizens against the arbitrary encroachments of the legislative and executive branches of government." Note that in the Republican view, it is the legislative and the executive that encroach, the Supreme Court that protects. What this means, in the light of the series of recent decisions, is that the national government is to be deprived of the power to regulate economic essentials such as wages, prices and profits, or to legislate in the general welfare. Coupled with this intention is the series of pledges running through the platform to rely principally upon state action for relief, welfare legislation, regulation and the like. It is a curious reversal of history by which the Republican Party becomes the defender of states' rights. But there is a sound logic in it. The Republican Party today stands where the Democratic Party stood in 1860—as the instrument of the most powerful property interest in the nation. Then it was the slaveholders who feared federal interference; now it is the owners of business property. In both cases the natural strategy is to deny power to the national government, which can interfere, and keep it in the states, which cannot effectively do so. Big business is nationwide and cannot be regulated by the states. Mr. Landon's "liberal" gesture, calling for a possible amendment to the Constitution empowering states to fix minimum wages and maximum hours of women and children is a costless concession that will not cause big business a sleepless moment.

In view of the effort of the Republicans to make government as nearly powerless as possible, in order that it may not rival the private government that dominates our economic life, most of the more liberal-sounding promises of the platform become mere eyewash—as they were intended to be. The pledge "to protect the rights of labor to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of its own choosing without interference from any source" will mean in practice a free field for company-union and employee-representation plans, without governmental policing to see that genuine unions

have a fair chance or elections are impartially conducted. And merely "to encourage adoption by the states and territories of honest and practical measures for meeting the problems of unemployment insurance" is politely to shelve the whole project.

The Republican candidate and platform are not aggressively, openly reactionary, as they might have been under Liberty League leadership. They appear to face all ways, to please all people. The campaign will probably be a skillful one, aiming to consolidate persons of divergent views in support of a mild and inconsistent position. Mr. Landon can act as the symbol, the personification of humane common sense, while the emissaries of the party can, in various communities and regions, promise almost anything their audiences would like to hear. But, under this protective coloration, the main drift of the platform is clear to anyone who takes the trouble to analyze it. It is perfectly satisfactory to Wall Street, Pittsburgh and Detroit, to Mr. Hearst and the utility magnates, to the economic rulers of America.

Starvation in New Jersey

JUST WHAT is happening to the unemployed in New Jersey since both the state and federal governments repudiated the obligation to help them is vividly described in a special report made by the W.P.A. and released by Harry L. Hopkins. The report bluntly says that "starvation and disease" exist in that state today. Twelve hundred cases were investigated, taken at random from the rolls, one hundred in each of twelve towns. The investigators found conditions that ought to make any decent American sick at the stomach. In one case, for example, "the baby in the family died two weeks ago from lack of milk. The fifteen-month-old child has whooping-cough now. With a mounting drug-store bill and no money on hand, the family don't know where they will get further medical supplies or medical care."

It has been a favorite theory of the Tories, including The New York Herald Tribune (which, by the way, buried the news of this important investigation in an article of four inches on page eleven), that the reduction in the cost of relief in New Jersey showed that there were many chiselers who have now been weeded out. The W.P.A. investigators, who know more about it than anyone else, deny that this is true. They say the only legitimate reason for cutting relief was the advent of summer and that most of the curtailment has come at the cost of much suffering on the part of the victims. In some communities all single persons are left to starve. Even a large family, if it has any income at all, though only \$1 a week, is also left to starve. In some cases relief is refused to those who have lived in the locality less than five years. Applicants for aid are insulted and humiliated, sometimes by making them stand in line in the most public place available. Everyone remembers the instances where

relief clients have been told to "go out and beg" and supplied with licenses for that purpose.

Mr. Hopkins, who is of course under the political necessity of supporting President Roosevelt's policy, tries to argue that these shocking conditions apply only to "unemployables" and that the W.P.A. is taking care of all others. But every informed person knows that this is nonsense. The federal government shares the responsibility for the dreadful conditions in New Jersey and other states. New Jersey's experience throws a harsh light on the Republicans' demand for completely localized relief.

The Happiness Boys Return

ONE WOULD have thought that Herbert Hoover and his Happiness Boys had demonstrated to everyone's satisfaction that ballyhoo has its drawbacks, especially as a method of solving economic problems. Certainly they gave it a fair trial around 1930-31, when they tried so earnestly to conjure up prosperity by announcing, every thirty days or so, that the depression was over. And certainly it is a matter of public record that the indices of employment, payrolls and business were anything but responsive to their incantations. Indeed, the indices seemed perverse: each time a rise was predicted it was practically a sure sign of a new decline.

We review these painful experiences of the Hoover epoch, because it appears that the lessons have been forgotten. Some of the Happiness Boys—or at least some of their school of thought—are again at work. Their main concern, it seems, is to make the present level of employment look better than it actually is. Why they should be concerned with such magic is a mystery, unless perhaps there is a desire on their part to minimize the need for an adequate relief program.

A noteworthy example of the thing we refer to is the survey made public the other day by Mr. George A. Sloan. It was reported in some detail in the papers and appeared in The New York Times under the optimistic head: "Survey Puts Jobs Near Level of 1929." Mr. Sloan, who is chairman of the Consumers Goods Industry Committee, a member of Secretary Roper's Business Advisory Council and former chairman of the Cotton Textile Code Authority, had the coöperation of a number of prominent industrialists in making his survey. They sent him reports that they or their industries were employing as many men as in 1929, and Mr. Sloan released these statements as proof that "American industry generally has given an inspiring example" in the sacrifices it has made to get men back to work.

It seems too good to be true, and it is. Among the contributions to Mr. Sloan's survey, for instance, is a statement from Walter C. Teagle, president of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. "We have more men employed than in 1929," says Mr. Teagle. He is supported in this by Mr. Axtell J.

Byles, president of the American Petroleum Institute. "I am glad to confirm Mr. Teagle's report for the petroleum industry as a whole," says Mr. Byles. This sounds just like 1929, only better, but the unfortunate thing about it is that the statistics of the Department of Labor tell a different story. They do not show more men employed in the oil industry, but fewer—the figure for April of this year being nearly 12 percent under 1929, with payrolls down more than 20 percent.

Another contributor to Mr. Sloan's survey is Paul S. Willis, president of the Associated Grocery Manufacturers of America. "This year," reports Mr. Willis, "our industry is employing 15 percent more people than in 1929." If that is so, the index of the Department of Labor for the food industry is worthless. For it does not show employment up 15 percent but down nearly 17 percent, with payrolls more than 23 percent under 1929. William Whitfield Woods, head of the Institute of American Meat Packers, does not report on employment in his industry except to say that it is "increasing," but he does observe that hourly wage rates are higher than in 1929. This may be so but, one regrets to say, it is not reflected in total payrolls for the industry, which are down more than 27 percent from '29.

Perhaps these samples are sufficient to indicate the nature of Mr. Sloan's survey, but for good measure we should like to mention two other gentlemen—Walter S. Tower, executive secretary of the American Iron and Steel Institute, and Ernest L. Trigg, president of the National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association. They both find the number of employed in their industries "approximately" the same as in 1929—"approximately" meaning, as used by Mr. Trigg, some 10 percent less and, as used by Mr. Tower, 23 percent less.

There is, to be sure, one thing to be said for Mr. Sloan. He at least does not try to prove, on the basis of his sample replies, that there is no unemployment. But where Mr. Sloan feared to tread, The New York Sun plunges in. It has been conducting its own unemployment survey for the past few weeks and has made some rather startling discoveries. For example, it has found that such leading merchandising establishments as Sears, Roebuck, Montgomery, Ward and Company, R. H. Macy, etc., are employing more people than they did in 1929. This affords The Sun basis for concluding that the retail field gives the "brightest employment picture" and for estimating that there is *no unemployment* in this field. The formula, you can see, is relatively simple, and by taking the reports of leading companies in various industries The Sun is able to show that there is very little unemployment. Where the American Federation of Labor, the National Industrial Conference Board and other reliable agencies still find ten to twelve million unemployed, The Sun can find only about three million, though it confesses that it has not bothered to count the unemployed in a few fields such as domestic service, agriculture and the professions.

Obviously, these attempts to brighten the unemployment picture raise some peculiar political problems. The Sun is, of course, a Republican paper, and a good number of Mr. Sloan's contributors are also Republicans. Yet it would seem that they are acting in a most non-Republican manner. For they seem to be going directly contrary to a major point of Senator Steiwer's keynote speech at Cleveland, namely, that there are still ten million unemployed. Clearly, what the Republicans need this year, if they are going to get anywhere, is some strict party discipline.

The New Russian Constitution

THE ANNOUNCEMENT of Soviet Russia's proposed new constitution could hardly have come at a more dramatic moment. Political democracy is at a heavy discount in many countries throughout the world today. Theorists have been telling us that it provides an inadequate answer to the problems with which the nations are now confronted. Yet the proposal that has been made for the U.S.S.R., and will undoubtedly be accepted, goes a long distance toward liberal, democratic organization on the model of the United States or Great Britain. It gives powerful ammunition, just at the moment of greatest need, with which to answer the fascist theorists of Italy and Germany.

Under the new plan, the U.S.S.R. will be governed by a bicameral legislature. One house, the All-Union Soviet Congress, will consist of about six hundred members chosen by direct, universal and secret suffrage, on a geographical basis, one member to each 300,000 of population. The House of Nationalities, of about three hundred members, will be chosen by the Provincial Councils, with ten members for each of the federated republics, five for each autonomous republic, and two for each autonomous region. These two houses will jointly elect the Council of Commissars, Presidium of thirty-one members, president, four assistants and secretary. The two houses are expected to meet twice a year, for sixty days at each session. If they disagree with each other, a new election is called; otherwise, the term in office is four years. Any member can be recalled by two-thirds vote of his constituents, and referenda on important national subjects are provided for. Under a plan similar to that of the British House of Commons, questions may be asked on government policies and replies by responsible officials returned within three days. All persons of both sexes over eighteen years of age have full right of suffrage, with a special proviso that this applies to formerly disfranchised "class enemies." The disparity between the voting power of the industrial worker and the peasant is now to be abolished, as was promised in February, 1935. While the summaries of the Constitution

thus far available are not quite clear, apparently large numbers of government officials will be under compulsion to seek membership in the All-Union Soviet Congress, and must resign their posts if defeated.

Some of the other new aspects of the Constitution will seem equally startling to many persons outside the U.S.S.R. The right of private property of a personal character is strongly emphasized. Even private farming is sanctioned, provided there is no exploitation of labor. Freedom of religion, the press and speech are underlined. Both houses of the new legislature will contain non-Communists as well as Communists. Further assurance that the civil rights of individuals will have increased protection is to be found in the fact that judges are to be elected—those of the lower courts by direct popular vote—for terms of limited duration. To round out the changes, the number of federated republics is increased from seven to eleven, the Caucasian Federation being broken up into Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, and Kirghizia and Kazakstan added.

While these changes are of profound significance, they are of course less sweeping than much of the comment that has been made outside the U.S.S.R. would imply. It was never true that Soviet Russia had a one-man dictatorship, as hostile critics have maintained, and even the dictatorship of the proletariat, operating chiefly through the Communist Party, has been much exaggerated both as to its efficiency and the ruthlessness with which it has carried out its aims. Some of the provisions of the new Constitution have been foreshadowed, and even partly effectuated, years ago.

The new proposal embodies no retreat from the program of socialism. The right of property will still not include the use of private capital, or the exploitation of another's labor. The guarantee of religious freedom means in essence the same situation that now exists, with churches tolerated but with only a decreasing and insignificant part of the rising generation embracing the old doctrines. Freedom of speech and of the press does not mean that advocates of private capitalism will be permitted to engage in public propaganda; it means increased emphasis on self-criticism within the assumption that the ideal toward which to work is a classless society and common ownership of the means of production. The Russian Communists will continue to believe that political liberty without economic security and justice is a delusion, and to safeguard their experiment at any cost.

The new proposals, in fact, are not an acknowledgment of failure but a demonstration of success. Marxian theory has always held that the dictatorship of the proletariat was merely a transitional stage in the movement toward completely democratic socialism. Over and over again the Russian leaders have emphasized that they were in the "war phase of communism," an interim period that was still at least as far from the ideal toward

which they were working as it was from the imperialism and capitalism of the days of the Tsars. If today they are able to relax the restrictions of the past, it is because the first phase of their work is largely completed. They began in a society that had never known liberty at all, a society 90 percent of whose members were the children or grandchildren of serfs. Today there are millions of adult men and women who have no memory of anything else than the socialist state. Of all the revolutions that have been going on simultaneously in Soviet Russia in the past eighteen years, none is more remarkable than the revolution in the outlook of a whole generation.

It will be said, of course, that the liberalized Constitution is part of the preparation for the coming war with Japan, that the leaders in Moscow are removing grievances of individuals at home in order to mobilize more effectively against an alien foe. While this result may take place, we do not believe that it is a matter of cause and effect. We believe the changes would have come about in any case, and have probably even been postponed by the desperate necessity of improvising military defenses both in the East and the West.

It is far too early to discuss the effect of Soviet Russia's new Constitution on her foreign relations. Vast quantities of anti-Russian propaganda in the Western countries have been based on the assumption that here was a remorseless dictatorship regimenting millions of reluctant slaves. When the new scheme goes into effect, the value of such propaganda will be greatly diminished. We doubt, however, whether any important realignment of the nations will, or can, result. The Great Powers are guided chiefly by what they consider to be their national self-interest and this includes, in most cases, a strong desire to see any and every socialist experiment fail. The leaders of the U.S.S.R. knew this when they entered the alliance with France. They are well aware that if their experiment is to be preserved in the midst of a hostile world, their own strength is its best and only guarantee.

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The Republicans Hate Roosevelt

THERE was no front-rank Republican leader at Cleveland who believes that Governor Landon, without great luck, can carry more than ten states next November. The business community, as a whole, thinks this, and it was a widely expressed judgment at Cleveland that, if business could reach a halfway satisfactory understanding with Mr. Roosevelt, it would fall over itself to do so. This belief gave the proceedings at Cleveland an unrealistic touch. It was like a march-past of the troops of an old-time Chinese war-lord. There was doubt whether the delegates were brave men organizing for battle, or the unwitting counters in a military-financial speculation.

But, whether or not Governor Landon can be elected, the Cleveland convention was an extraordinary gathering. It provided an answer to the question whether business has lost confidence in itself, whether it is ready to give in before rising social unrest. It is not. After the Cleveland convention, any person who fancies that important social changes can be brought about easily, or without fighting, is deluding himself or herself. If business interests can compromise with Mr. Roosevelt, they may sell out Mr. Landon in 1936. But it will be only to gain time for a come-back in 1940, and plans for victory then were carefully laid at Cleveland.

There is some truth in the claim that the Republican Party has been reborn. The old national bosses were swept from their seats—Mr. Charles D. Hilles, ex-Senator David H. Reed, Mr. Ogden L. Mills and a dozen others. The lobbies of the two best hotels were filled with pressing jobs for the morticians. The traditional representatives of the railroads, the United States Steel Corporation, the Standard Oil Company, although present, were inarticulate. Nearly a thousand newspaper reporters hunted diligently to identify the political agents of Mr. Hearst, but without success. The greatest Republican newspaper owner of the Middle West, Colonel Robert McCormick, fought to prevent the nomination of his colleague, Colonel Knox, as Vice President, and was greeted with yawns.

The Republican Party that was reborn, however, is a child of its parent in the same degree that a present-day sawed-off shotgun is the child of the mail-train robber's carbine. It is much more efficient. The men who, in the last analysis, controlled this convention were the heads of the smaller units of the steel and oil cartels, and of new industries like chemicals and automobiles. Their type was exemplified by Mr. Ernest T. Weir of the steel industry, and Messrs. Joseph Pew and Frank Phillips among oilmen. With important exceptions, they were men who started life as poor boys, and whose

main interest, as individuals, is still in producing and selling, rather than in financial manipulations. They have ridden out the depression, and are cocky and full of fight.

These men picked Mr. Landon very much as they would choose a new metallurgical process, or one for utilizing petroleum waste-products. They consulted expert analyzers of consumer-trends, and studied reports of mass-market psychologists. Some of them were the personal friends of Colonel Knox, but when his brand of goods didn't catch on in the pre-convention campaign, they refused, as business men, to buy.

Beyond a general knowledge that he was safe for business, it can be said with certainty that, when the convention opened, Governor Landon's principal backers knew almost nothing about him. During the succeeding days, he turned out to be, in miniature, a man like themselves, self-assured, aggressive, ambitious. The "country boys from Kansas," who managed his campaign in Cleveland, were no slavish takers of orders. With the possible exception of Mr. John D. M. Hamilton, they were abysmally ignorant of business personalities, and treated all Eastern business men with the same overemphasized disregard that country boys in New York show to night-club *maitres d'hôtel*. They knew the power of business in the affairs of the Republican Party, but they also felt that they had the candidate, and a good-sized bloc of votes in their own right. They were ready to agree to any reasonable bargain, but not to fall flat on their faces.

Business men and the Landon managers, hungry for national power, dominated the Cleveland convention. The glue that they used to bind together the party beneath them was hatred of Mr. Roosevelt. The crowd differed from previous Republican conventions. There were few Republican job-holders, since there have been in the last three years few Republican jobs. Probably more than half were small-town best people, owners of banks and factories, or their lawyer-representatives. The fullest opportunity that they had to express themselves was when Senator Vandenberg, in his seconding speech for Landon, bellowed like a bull water-buffalo: "I belong to but one bloc and it has but one slogan—stop Roosevelt!" The answering roar had the ecstasy and cruelty of a Southern lynch mob.

Almost certainly this is the explanation of the unexpected approval given Mr. Hoover on the evening before Governor Landon's nomination. Somewhere within Mr. Hoover's awkward form burns the pure, sacred flame of hate—hate for Mr. Roosevelt and all his works. The convention sensed this, and at the bare sight of him under the blinding,

sizzling movie lamps, his skull damply white through his sparse remaining hair, his hands twitching in and out of his pockets, his knees visibly trembling in his pant-legs, it went wild. The only possible civilized emotion would have been compassion; instead he evoked frenzy. As he started to speak, the microphones broke down because—according to report—the Cleveland city administration had refused to adjust the wage demands of electricians the week before, and their work had not been properly inspected and tested. His speech was without intelligible emphasis or pause, but, as he went on, his reiteration of the evilness of the New Deal, quite without proofs, made it sound like a long, cabalistic malediction. He called for men and women to join a crusade to destroy the New Dealers utterly, and sixteen thousand people shouted "yes," like a congregation of the baptized. At that point, by coincidence, a thunderstorm burst over Cleveland, and, as Mr. Hoover implored the Christian God to prevail against the heresy of Mr. Roosevelt, his words were punctuated by claps of thunder. When he had finished and gone, the delegates spontaneously broke into the "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

These small business men and lawyers and their wives, unlike the big business men in control of the convention, were still frightened by the depression, and worse frightened by Mr. Roosevelt's tax proposals. The few times that minor delegates spoke, they talked almost wholly of "the taxpayers' money," a phrase that one woman delegate repeated probably twenty times in a two-minute speech. Mr. Roosevelt is going to take their money from them through taxes, and give it to the unemployed in relief, and grimly, earnestly, religiously, they hate him. On the final night, after John Hamilton had pronounced Governor Landon's name in his nominating speech, the delegates paraded, according to tradition, carrying the state standards. A Cleveland cop, lounging in an aisle, watched them with wonderment. "Jeeze," he said finally, "they've been walking around here for twenty-five minutes, all on ice water." The parade was one not, as usually happens, of youths brought in by a local Republican district club, but of the delegates and alternates themselves, and they were drearily sober. In a painstaking inspection, I was able to see just one drunk. It was a parade of substantial-looking, well dressed people, milling around in solemn determination to do whatever they had to do to make effective their anger at the New Deal.

Governor Landon's business backers, the Governor himself and his campaign managers, are being held up by this flood of blank reaction. It is a complete mistake to think that this will determine their policies. The chief issue at Cleveland was that of a constitutional amendment to repair the Supreme Court's five-to-four decision invalidating the New York minimum-wage law. The way in which this issue was treated illustrates accurately the methods and temper of the new Republican Party. The

amendment was first suggested by Mr. William Allen White, the moral conscience of the Landon group. It was promptly accepted by Mr. Landon by long-distance telephone from Topeka. According to an unconfirmed report, it was also telephoned to representatives of the duPonts, and, whether or not it was approved by them, their spokesman at Cleveland, Governor Buck of Delaware, continued to work happily in Mr. Landon's behalf. Opposition within the resolutions committee came from two sources, from the defeated Old-Guard National Committeemen, led by Senator Reed of Pennsylvania, and from Senator Borah. The Landon managers, driving ahead to their goal of an unanimous nomination, avoided a quarrel with either side. At the moment of his nominating speech, when it was too late for the Old Guard and Borah to act, John Hamilton read to the convention, amid deathly silence, Mr. Landon's telegram making a constitutional amendment part of the Republican platform.

It was sharp, ruthless tactics, even to the point of double-dealing, but on another level it was politics of a statesmanlike kind. In one stroke, Mr. Landon and the group around him freed themselves from the hunkerism of Mr. Hoover and the party rank-and-file. Mr. Hoover's policy of no compromise, as a program for a governing group, is one showing weakness rather than strength, and is an invitation to defeat and extinction. Mr. Landon made a tangible, definite concession to the mass of workers without whom the Republicans never can win. It was also the smallest concession—a bare permission for states to enact minimum-wage laws—that he could have possibly made, and in exchange he asks control of the federal government. The technique of small, definite concessions in return for power is that of a strong governing group. It is the method of Disraeli, Bismarck and all first-rank conservatives.

In the background at Cleveland, but in frequent communication with the sweating, sleepless Landon managers, were Professors E. W. Kemmerer and Neil Carothers. Off in Topeka, Governor Landon, according to those in his confidence, poured over Dr. Harold G. Moulton's volumes on America's capacity to produce and consume. The recommendations of Dr. Moulton, in particular, for a national policy of lowered prices, new and improved products and expanding markets, is accepted by at least some of the business personalities behind Mr. Landon, and is generally in effect in the automobile and chemical industries. The men behind Mr. Landon are perhaps the most capable in American business. For three years the Republican Party, as a political force, has been nonexistent. It was reestablished at Cleveland, a compact and formidable Tory group. Within a few weeks, we will know whether the business men who have given it new life have decided to wait until 1940, or whether they intend to bid for power with Landon. If they back Landon, this may be the bitterest campaign since the Civil War.

Cleveland.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

Can Father Coughlin Come Back?

THEY SAID there had been no such meeting since Bryan in 1896. That was when Father Coughlin came to Madison Square Garden a year ago and set all New York by the ears.

But mass enthusiasms come and go. On August 13-16 Father Coughlin will hold a convention of his National Union for Social Justice in Cleveland. If it is what its name implies, a delegated assemblage and not a mere mass meeting, as was the case with Coughlin's state "conventions" last year, and if it is representative of his organization nationally, it should help to shed some light on the question of whether the radio priest's influence has seriously declined. That he has been in recent months a far less spectacular figure than he was a year ago is certain. To some extent the Townsend movement has crowded him out of the public eye. His influence on Congress is obviously no longer what it was. But this is not the whole story by any means.

It is much too early to ring down the curtain on Coughlin. There are, in fact, a number of developments that indicate that this shrewd and worldly priest may be building less spectacularly but more substantially for the future. Most important of these developments has been the setting up of membership units of the National Union for Social Justice. Coughlin launched this organization with a great fanfare on November 11, 1934. But it remained nothing more than a glorified mailing list, which was used from time to time as a pressure lobby. As time passed, Coughlin, who is the self-appointed president and treasurer of the organization, realized that the formidable movement his voice had conjured into being was melting away. On last December 8 he therefore issued a call for 50,000 volunteer organizers to set up units on a congressional-district scale. After four months of organization the unit officers in each congressional district met, on April 5, and elected district officials.

The chief activity of the National Union for Social Justice is at present centered on the endorsement and support of Republican or Democratic candidates for Congress—with the central office at Royal Oak reserving the right to approve or disapprove any endorsement. The organization's membership can only be guessed at. At the height of the movement last year Coughlin claimed 9,000,000 members—undoubtedly a greatly inflated figure. Now he has ceased giving membership figures, but claims 20,000 units. The minimum membership for a unit is fifty in cities and twenty-five in rural areas; if we place the average unit membership at sixty, the total would be more than one million. Whatever the exact figure, an organized membership, active in politics, is potentially more formidable than an amorphous radio lobby several times as great. In

the Ohio primary a few weeks ago an astonishingly large number of Coughlin-endorsed candidates were successful.

The membership of the Social Justice units is composed largely of farmers and small business and professional people, but Coughlin's influence is strong among militant seamen and longshoremen in New York City, textile workers in New England, miners in western Pennsylvania, Farmer-Laborites in Minnesota. And this despite his anti-union record.

Next in importance has been the launching of a sixteen-page weekly paper, *Social Justice*. It carries no advertising and is distributed at a nominal price. In view of the fact that Father Coughlin broadcasts only twenty-six weeks a year, the paper becomes especially important as a means of binding the organization together during the other six months. Another development is the expansion of his radio network. For his last season (November 3 to April 26) he increased the number of stations on his hook-up from twenty-nine to thirty-four. For the first time his voice has been heard on the West Coast and in the South, where he has invaded Huey Long's home territory with the acquisition of Station WDSU of New Orleans.

Currency inflation is both the strength and the weakness of the Coughlin movement. Its strength, because of the persistence of inflationary sentiment in this country since the Civil War, particularly among the Midwest farming population, and the tendency for this sentiment to assume mass proportions in periods of economic stress. The weakness of any such movement is that business recovery, even of the partial and uneven kind that we have been experiencing for the past two years, tends to weaken inflationary sentiment and, particularly, to dampen the enthusiasm of those big capitalist groups that seek to jack up the price structure through inflation.

Coughlin's inflationary proposals are much more than a monetary program; they are a blueprint for Utopia. His sixteen-point statement of principles also includes other planks, such as "a just and living annual wage" and "cost of production plus a fair profit for the farmer," but he has made it clear that none of these improvements can be realized until his inflationary program is adopted. This program is guaranteed to produce "prosperity for all . . . for laborer and farmer, for industrialist and professional man." (Radio speech, December 9, 1934.)

In his specific inflationary proposals, however, Coughlin has been no more consistent than in his political loves and hates. His first crusade was for the revaluation of gold. This he urged not as a desirable reform, but as *the* reform. "The only two ways out are revaluation of our gold ounce or

repudiation of our debts," he said in his broadcast of November 6, 1932. "One way is Christianity. The other way is Bolshevism."

Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose candidacy Coughlin was ardently supporting, did not disappoint him. He chose the way of Christianity and revalued the gold ounce, cutting, theoretically, 40 cents out of the purchasing power of the dollar. This inflationary shot in the arm failed, however, to produce the miracle that the seer of Royal Oak had predicted. Whereupon he denounced gold revaluation as having "multiplied by billions of dollars the gold in the hands of the internationalists—the European Warburgs, the Rothschilds and the rest of that group—who are notorious financial Dillingers," and promptly pulled a new panacea out of his hat: silver remonetization. "Forward to Christ, all ye people!" he exhorted in a broadcast on November 19, 1933. "March! March today! God wills it—this religious crusade against the pagan god of gold!"

Though God had willed it—and his silver-speculating friends had cleaned up on it—Coughlin in the fall of 1934 went off both the gold and silver standards. And the National Union for Social Justice was born as a crusade for a new cure-all: nationalization of the Federal Reserve System.

In one respect, however, the volatile priest has remained consistent: all his inflationary proposals have been bound up with the issuance of new paper money. In this connection it should be noted that the only legislation which he actively supports is that involving currency expansion in some form.

Father Coughlin has repeatedly denounced the last war as "a war to make the world safe for Wall Street and the international bankers." (Radio speech, November 11, 1934.) He has supported the Senate Committee's investigation of the munitions industry. At times he has shown that he has some understanding of the causes of war by condemning "the insanity of attempting to perpetuate an economic system which has not only been the breeder of wars, but which proclaims that financial rights are more sacred than human rights."

Compare these radical anti-war statements with Coughlin's bristling chauvinism, which reached a high point in the Hearst-Coughlin agitation on the World Court issue. Compare his support of the Senate Munitions Committee with the fact that he has never criticized the huge war budget of the American government, but has made statements such as this: "Let us build ten thousand airplanes to guard our coasts, to secure our liberties and to keep America safe for Americans from without."

And compare the acknowledgment that the capitalist economic system breeds wars with Father Coughlin's position on Mussolini's invasion of Ethiopia: "Granted that Italy is desirous of expansion," he said on last November 3, "she has at least some slight justification for her movement into Ethiopia. At least Italy could truthfully charge that her territory already existing in Africa has been invaded at least ninety times by the Ethiopians."

And further on: "Today the Italian army is charged with bombing Red Cross hospitals in Ethiopia when at the moment it was proven that there was not one such hospital in existence in that land."

Add to this Coughlin's repeated defense of Hitler's disarmament moves and scuttling of treaties, his silence on the persecution of Catholics in Germany, statements such as that Hitler has "the 99-percent confidence of the German people" (Social Justice, April 17), and the virulent attacks on the Franco-Soviet pact that appear in his paper.

Add them all up—and what have you?

Father Coughlin's position in our political turmoil has for two years been as elusive as the wind. The Detroit priest was in the halcyon days of the New Deal its most ardent crusader. No member of the administration itself ever made such extravagant claims for the New Deal as the coiner of the slogan, "Roosevelt or Ruin."

But when the balloon of inflation failed to get going in the style that the currency aeronauts had expected, the mercurial priest changed his tune. Thus, on April 8, 1934, Coughlin told his radio audience: "I will never change my philosophy that the New Deal is Christ's Deal." Two weeks later, at the so-called "Committee of Patriots" dinner in Washington (the patriots consisting chiefly of silver speculators), Coughlin denounced the N.R.A. as "borrowed part and parcel from Mussolini," and charged the administration with substituting "the suggestion of a Mussolini and the dogma of a Stalin" for the ideals of Washington and Jefferson.

The clash with General Johnson a year ago saw the wizard of Royal Oak touch a new high in this game of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't. On March 3, 1935, he raked the New Deal fore and aft, charging that the administration had "out-Hoovered Hoover." "I will not support a New Deal," he said, "which protects plutocrats and comforts Communists." A little over a week later, on March 11—after General Johnson had administered his public tongue-lashing—the radio priest swallowed about 95 percent of his words without choking on them. This time it was: "I still proclaim to you that it is either 'Roosevelt or Ruin.' I support him today and will support him tomorrow."

In his first broadcasts last fall he continued to woo the Tories with considerable ardor, echoing the diatribes in the most reactionary Republican and Hearst press. He decried the "Communism" of the New Deal, defended the Supreme Court and castigated the would-be ravishers of the Constitution. Once more came a tongue-lashing, this time evidently from irate followers, some of whose complaints he read over the radio. The elastic priest thereupon spent an entire broadcast explaining that he desired "to perfect the New Deal," and gently edged himself into another about-face. Thus, on November 17 he had read a litany of the crimes of the New Deal and come to the conclusion: "Generally speaking, the New Deal and the National

Union possess principles which are unalterably opposed." On December 1, after again reëxamining the New Deal, he found: "In this age of transition I am for the principles of the New Deal." Truly an age of transition!

During the past few months Coughlin's strategy has been to attack both the Republican and Democratic Parties and exploit to the full the developing sentiment for independent political action. As for a new party, he has definitely warned against it, but here too he has shown himself ready to play a double game. "The day has come, my friends," he said on April 19, "when perhaps it is necessary to establish not a third party, not a fourth party, not a fifth party, but to establish a people's party."

Will the National Union for Social Justice become such a "people's party"? Coughlin has persistently denied that he is creating a new or a potentially new party. But obviously he is building a political machine, based on congressional districts, that can easily be converted into a new party.

The April 24 issue of Social Justice states that the National Union "is not in the national presidential campaign." And Coughlin now goes so far as to deny the importance of the presidency. He has also forbidden his followers to participate in local or state politics, confining their activity solely to the congressional elections. This is sound strategy from the standpoint of achieving his immediate aims. Whether Roosevelt or a Republican is elected, Coughlin knows that inflation loses. The only hope for it to win is by extending the already considerable inflation bloc in Congress. At the same time his recent utterances have tended to bring grist to the mill of Republican reaction.

But the pastor of the Shrine of the Little Flower is much more than the evangelist of inflation. For though the populist movements of the past plowed the ground for him among the farmers and lower-middle class, the essentials of his program and of his political ideology have been nourished by big capitalist groups. Coughlin was not always an inflationist. According to his official biographer, Louis B. Ward, who heads his Washington lobby, the Detroit priest made his first excursion into the realm of money magic as the result of a conference on October 23, 1932, with two missionaries from Wall Street, George LeBlanc, former vice-president of the Equitable Trust Company (later merged with the Chase National), and Robert M. Harriss, silver speculator and member of the Cotton Exchange.

The priest's close relations with Hearst are no secret, and he has also flirted with Henry Ford, who from time to time has shown some interest in currency tinkering. What Coughlin sorely needs is another Huey Long (with whom, by the way, he was especially thick) to hitch his wagon to, since he himself cannot run for office without being unfrocked. His is, however, the long-range view. Partial recovery may sharply curtail his influence for a while—though even this is uncertain in view of continued unemployment and chronic crisis in

agriculture—but Coughlin knows that despite any temporary flush, the system is deathly sick, and that drastic remedies may be needed. The American Hitler may have died with Huey Long, but the Paul Joseph Goebbels of Royal Oak believes his successor will come.

A. B. MAGIL.

Hawkwise, the Wind

(For W. L. E.: Green Bay: 7. V. 1934)

Hawkwise, the wind
swoops—and it rises—there!
winged terror-of-the-woods, its
prey the anguish of our hearts, our

cries it trails behind, rising
from the thickets' silences.

Fire like harrying packs,
snapping hounds, has run the spring
down, attacked.

The ground
the pine-root, stump, the lower
boughs are burnt black, the brambles—
ash. Pines bar the black
land with blacker shadows.

On pine-branch,
the hawk! rides, its feathers

ruffled and branches
tossed, its beak
speechless, its claws
eloquent of death, the dead

snake drooping from them. Only the eyes
are alive—baleful, shining,
swerving as wind
swerves, silent as wind

is silent, alive.

Hawk: what
kills wait in your claws,
your wing, your silence?

(Slantwise and
sliding as wind slides, gliding
the silence, it is
the owl

rouses the fright of jays,
their cries from the cedar-swamp
They rise from cedars
crying.

But who else comes? My heart is
cold, veins ice, lungs
silent, one breath
risen and rising

like one last bird
risen and flying from the stony
and frozen land, with winter
come.)

RAYMOND E. F. LARSSON.

Thomas Wolfe: A Portrait

SINCE Mr. Thomas Wolfe's monumental sextology, only two parts of which have been published, begins in the city of Asheville, it is not unfitting that this essay, prompted by his latest book,¹ should also begin there.

Asheville is a city of some 50,000 inhabitants situated in that part of western North Carolina where the Southern Appalachians begin to rise into the Great Smoky Mountains that run northward and westward into Tennessee. It is a region of great beauty, one of the most beautiful sections of all America, but Asheville, like certain other American localities (New Orleans, for example), has sacrificed much of its natural charm and character to become a tourist center—in which it has succeeded only too well. It has on the surface the air and bustle of a city: shops, hotels, theatres, golf courses, night clubs. Dig beneath the surface, however, as Mr. Wolfe does in "Look Homeward, Angel," and you unearth something entirely different—a small, parochial, isolated town.

It was here, on October 3, 1900, that Thomas Clayton Wolfe was born. His father, William Oliver Wolfe, was a native Pennsylvanian who had learned the craft of stonecutter in Baltimore. Restless, a man of great physical strength and appetites, William Wolfe wandered the country for many years; finally drifting across the mountains to Asheville and setting up his shop there. In his small way he prospered and, in time, married Julia Elizabeth Westall—a member of a hardy, prolific, Presbyterian family native to that section of North Carolina for several generations.

These simple facts already take on an extremely familiar air. Have we not heard them before? Who is William Oliver Wolfe but Oliver Gant? Who is Julia Elizabeth Westall but Mrs. Gant? Who is Eugene Gant but Thomas Wolfe himself? So, at the outset, we come to the frequently asked question: "Is Thomas Wolfe writing his autobiography?" In answer, it is perhaps best to let Mr. Wolfe speak for himself.

"My book ['Look Homeward, Angel'] was what is often referred to as an autobiographical novel," he writes in "The Story of a Novel." "I protested against this in a preface to the book upon the grounds that any serious work of creation is of necessity autobiographical. . . . A man must use the material and experience of his own life if he is to create anything of substantial value."

But this, it may be objected, begs the question. It answers yes and no at the same time. That, however, is the only answer that can be made. When Mr. Wolfe says there is not a page in his novels

that is true to fact we must take him at his word. Few literary practitioners, I feel sure, will disagree with his statement that our own material is all we have. It is our one single well. When it runs dry, we too run dry. The difference between the autobiographical quality of Mr. Wolfe's novels and that of a novel like Mr. F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Tender Is the Night" or Mr. Ernest Hemingway's "The Sun Also Rises" is only one of degree. Just exactly where fact ends and fancy begins, I do not think even Mr. Wolfe can say: but "Look Homeward, Angel" and "Of Time and the River" are, certainly, more than mere transcripts of experience. If they compose his autobiography it is, as he says in the preface of his first book and as he once said to me, the sort of autobiography that Dean Swift wrote in "Gulliver's Travels." It was this idea that he hoped to convey by the subtitle he gave to "Of Time and the River"—*A Legend of Man's Hunger in His Youth*. I think it is fairly safe, therefore, to formulate this general principle: No matter how closely Mr. Wolfe's characters resemble their living prototypes, they have all, in some way or other, been transfigured by the talent and personality of the author. They are, in short, idealistic creations.

Tom Wolfe grew up in Asheville. His childhood was not a very happy one for him. His father and mother were always at war with each other, a conflict of strong and opposite wills that was never fully resolved, and his brothers and sisters had little or no time for him. "I guess the only real sympathy and understanding I had during this period of my life," he said one evening, "came from my brother Ben." This brother, of course, is the Ben Gant of the novels: the Benjamin Harrison Wolfe to whose memory is dedicated the book of shorter pieces "From Death to Morning."

Mrs. Wolfe, hitching the family's fortunes to the rapidly rising star of Asheville, opened a boarding-house for vacationists in more moderate circumstances. People came and went—something drab and futile about them all: gossipy, bickering, empty. Tom, before and after school hours, was made to do errands and help around the house. School was as much a torment as was his life at home. His schoolmates, like his brothers and sisters, felt he was "queer." They find it difficult, today, to realize he has become an important American writer. I met one of his schoolmates in Asheville. "We all thought Tom Wolfe was cuckoo," he said. "I can't get over his success."

The boy, however, found his avenue of escape: in books: in the world of poetry and ideas. His father had a taste for rhetoric and he passed on this taste to his son. Mr. Wolfe describes him thus: "My father

¹ The Story of a Novel, by Thomas Wolfe. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 93 pages. \$1.50.

was a man with a great respect and veneration for literature. He had a tremendous memory and he loved poetry. . . . Hamlet's soliloquy, Marc Antony's funeral oration, Gray's 'Elegy' and all the rest of it. I heard it all as a child. I memorized it all." If Mr. Wolfe, then, has returned declamation to American literature (it was Herman Melville who introduced it), his father, it seems apparent, is largely responsible. The hymns to America and to October in "Of Time and the River" (some of the finest writing ever produced by a native author) and those to Brooklyn and Fifth Avenue in "From Death to Morning" (of a slightly inferior quality) had their genesis in a boarding-house in Asheville.

I often wondered, walking the streets of Tom Wolfe's native place, the range of mountains looming behind the skyscraper city hall whose pink roof looks like a birthday cake left out in the rain, how such a walled-in place produced a writer so deeply conscious, so very disturbed, by the vastness of America. (That two-hundred-page train ride in "Of Time and the River" for example.) "There are going to be some damned fine books written in this country of ours," Wolfe once said. "Books with the feeling of the country—its power and magnificence. You can't have a really great novel in this country that lacks the feeling of space." It was not until I went to live in the mountains of North Carolina myself, and discovered what being hill-bound really means, that I understood that Mr. Wolfe's preoccupation with space—with the bigness of America—is a kind of protest against the isolation in which he was vacuumized as a boy. Those trains that roar across his books are far more than trains. They are symbols of escape—symbols retained from the time when, as a small boy, he delivered newspapers in the back streets of Asheville's Niggertown and heard the wailing of a whistle die upon the night; wondering what lay in the northward direction of the train and determined, some day, to go beyond the mountains and find out for himself.

The boy read everything he could lay his hands on. Among the books mentioned in "Look Homeward, Angel" are Ridpath's "History of the World," "With Stanley in Africa," Stoddard's "Lectures." The book he remembers best, however, is Kipling's "The Jungle Book." He calls it one of the greatest books he read as a kid. "It had a kind of magic about it," he says. "I was tempted to write Kipling once and tell him about the influence it had on my youth."

Tom was ready for college at the age of fifteen. His father sent him to the University of North Carolina where he was graduated, after four years, with an A.B. degree. "The desire to write, which had been strong during all my days in high school," he says, "grew stronger still. I was editor of the college paper, the college magazine, etc. and in my last year or two I was a member of a course in play-writing which had just been established there." Paul Green was also a member of this course (conducted

by Professor Frederick Henry Koch), but whereas it helped Mr. Green to find his proper stride it only served to start Tom Wolfe's literary career off on the wrong foot. He was going to be all out of step with himself for almost ten years. His earnest and painful attempts to confine his talent within the very strict limitations of the drama (since we have a different dramatic tradition from that of the Chinese and if Mr. Wolfe will please understand I am not trying to be funny about his size) was like trying to put a straitjacket on a whale. The whale fumed, fussed and fretted—and finally, with excellent good sense, it said to hell with this sort of foolishness and went swimming out to sea.

—During his dramaturgic period at Chapel Hill, Mr. Wolfe wrote three plays: "The Return of Buck Gavin: The Tragedy of a Mountain Outlaw" (Tom played the title role and was Buck for the rest of his college days), "Deferred Payment" and "The Third Night: A Ghost Play of the Carolina Mountains." None of them, he says, was worth a damn. Again, we must take him at his word. But even then, as is shown by his foreword to "Buck Gavin" (the first of his writings to be published, incidentally: "Carolina Folk Plays, Second Series, 1924"), he had a pretty definite idea about the kind of writing he wanted to do: "It is a fallacy of the young writer, I believe, to picture the dramatic as unusual and remote . . . the dramatic is not the unusual. It is happening in our daily lives."

The "Look Homeward, Angel" period of Mr. Wolfe's life ends with his graduation from Chapel Hill. The "Of Time and the River" phase begins with his departure for Harvard. It would be futile, I believe, like trying to reduce "David Copperfield" to a single biographical paragraph about Dickens, even to attempt an outline of Mr. Wolfe's life during the years 1920-29. Everything is contained in "Of Time and the River"—again in the legendary sense of autobiography that the author emphasizes, although his second book hews more closely to fact than does "Look Homeward, Angel." At Harvard he was a member of Professor Baker's "47 Workshop," wrote three more plays, discovered James Joyce, read omnivorously, was graduated with an M.A., returned to Asheville, taught English at New York University (some of his former young-lady students now grow jittery at the very idea of having sat at his feet—"He was like a mountain God," one of them says), went abroad, returned to the States, went abroad again. In 1926—"how, why, or in what manner I have never been exactly able to determine"—he started writing "Look Homeward, Angel." He was then living in London, alone, unknown, uncertain of himself and his future.

The secret of how, and why, "Look Homeward, Angel" came to be written is contained, I believe, in the poetic fragment with which the book begins. It is one of those books, and how many such books there have been, written out of loneliness and despair, ". . . a stone, a leaf, an unfound door . . .

which of us has not remained forever prison-pent? Which of us is not forever a stranger and alone? . . . O lost. . ." It is, despite the "realism" that caused such a furore in Asheville when it appeared, the nostalgic yearning of a provincial (I use the word in its exact meaning) who, in a strange and distant country, longs for the sight of a familiar landscape: familiar faces, familiar voices, familiar feuds. It was born out of a passionate feeling of place: a consciousness of class, of family, of home.

The important accomplishment of Thomas Wolfe is not his "tremendous capacity for living," not his voice, "which sounds as if it were from demons, gods and seraphim," not even his "most successful attempt since Joyce and Proust to instill new blood and life into that withered literary form, the novel." It is much less fancy and literary than that. Thomas Wolfe is unique among our younger American writers in that, using the material of a section, he has managed to surpass mere regionalism and—despite repetition, overwordiness and some of the most unsuccessful writing in our literature—to impress that material with the mark of universality.

This statement, I feel sure, will meet with various objections. How about Mr. William Faulkner? Has he not also taken the material of a section and endowed it with universal meaning? I think he has—but a necessary distinction has to be made: involving personal judgments and convictions. The universal quality of a book like, let us say, "The Sound and the Fury," is a quality of mood, of emotion—the same investment of horror that gave Edgar Allen Poe his vogue and influence in France. That of "Look Homeward, Angel" (which I believe is the best book Mr. Wolfe has written) is quite different. It rests not upon the evocation of moods (which are universal to begin with) but upon the re-creation of a place and characters understandable, in the light of their own knowledge and experience, to readers all over the Western world—witness the book's success in such dissimilar countries as, among others, Soviet Russia and Hitlerite Germany. Am I arguing that Eugene Gant is, of all people, Everyman? I am not. I am simply saying that, in writing his legendary autobiography, Mr. Wolfe has written something of the autobiographies of us all.

The manuscript of "Look Homeward, Angel," 350,000 words long, kicked around from publisher to publisher. The reader at Liveright called it "an autobiographical novel with flashes of talent." Eventually Wolfe's agent sent it to Scribner's, where it was read by Maxwell Perkins. At the risk of offending Mr. Perkins' extreme modesty—since he has played an important part in Wolfe's career—I have to identify him as the publisher Wolfe writes about in "The Story of a Novel." He believed in "Look Homeward, Angel" but felt it ought to be cut down. He wrote Wolfe, who was then in Vienna, asking if he would be willing to revise the book to a publishable length.

"I don't know whether I even read the letter at the time," Tom says. "I had had so much run-around from the theatre crowd that I thought it was a form letter. I had been in a bloody beer fight. The police were cross-examining me. I felt I had made a mess of my life. I wrote Perkins and said I might be back around January first."

He was. He saw Perkins and got an advance. In the spring and summer of 1929, he worked on the manuscript. "Look Homeward, Angel" was published that fall. It was a substantial, but not spectacular, success. That success was not to come until 1935 when, after six years of incredibly furious writing, "Of Time and the River" appeared. The events of those six years have been so completely examined by Mr. Wolfe, the process of writing "Of Time and the River" so fully described, that any attempt to synopsise them would simply be labor wasted. Neither is it necessary to dwell upon the success of Mr. Wolfe's latest novel. He now towers on the literary horizon in all the bulk of six-feet-five and two hundred substantial pounds.

Mr. Wolfe says he is sick and tired of hearing about how big he is. No wonder. There have been enough cute stories to make anybody tired. But the accident of his size, I am convinced, has also had an influence on his work. Since this is an opinion I have already expressed in *The New Republic* (January 1, 1936), I will repeat myself only to the extent of saying that, having had his size so deeply impressed upon him, Mr. Wolfe (as various passages from his books, particularly "From Death to Morning," testify) seems to have concluded that a similar uniqueness is attached to his emotional and intellectual adventures. This conclusion, I think it possible to hold, is one of the sources of both his power and his weakness—his power because he is able, frequently, to make incidents that other writers would dismiss as being trivial not only unique but extremely important: his weakness because, just as frequently, they remain on the plane of triviality—unimportant, without purpose, terribly overwritten. That this may happen, that every word he writes is not worthy of preservation, Mr. Wolfe finds somehow difficult to believe. Thus, when Maxwell Perkins cut some 50,000 words from "Of Time and the River" at one sitting, Wolfe was aghast. "This," he shouted, banging his fist on the table, "is the greatest crime since Judas betrayed Christ!"

This brings us, finally, to the great length of Mr. Wolfe's books—the thing that caused Mr. Ernest Hemingway to wonder if he would not become a better writer if he were exiled to the Dry Tortugas. Personally, I would hate to see Mr. Wolfe exiled anywhere. I wish, however, that he would accept the statement of a great novelist—Tolstoy—who once said that discipline is the most important of all the artist's instruments: even more important than genius itself. And discipline, as "War and Peace" illustrates, has nothing to do with length.

That Mr. Wolfe has made a place for himself in American literature goes, I think, without saying. It

is yet impossible, however, to decide what his final place will be. His published work represents—as he himself says in “The Story of a Novel”—only a partial achievement. Were he to stop writing tomorrow, that verdict—which overlooks too much, as all verdicts do—would have to stand. Mr. Wolfe, however, is not going to stop writing. In “The Story of a Novel” he outlines some of his plans for the future: his program of work, what he hopes to accomplish. He also says, in effect (as he did in certain interviews with the press) that he is going to renounce his former ways and try to do better in the future. That is all very fine but I like the declaration contained in a letter I had from him much better. “I have something I’d like you to see but it ain’t wrote good yet. You wait—I’ll learn ’em!” And learn ’em I think he will.

HAMILTON BASSO.

The Bath House Steps

MY WIFE and I would rather have a baby. That’s the right thing to have. But we can’t afford a baby so we decided to have a dog, a small dog. We can’t really afford a dog either, but we thought we might be able to keep one if we got it for nothing.

The place to get dogs for nothing is the A.S.P.C.A. We’d been told about it. They have a lot of homeless dogs there and all you have to do is go and pick one out and they give it to you.

The A.S.P.C.A. has a fine, neat-looking building down near the waterfront. Straight across the street from it is a free city bath house that has Greek columns and a wide flight of steps all across the front. Sitting on these steps when the sun is shining are bums, or single, unemployed men, resting or catching a little sleep after their baths. They come from a long way away for these free baths and they are tired afterwards. More of them are scattered out in the vacant lots nearby. Some of them sleep sitting up while others merely stretch out on the ground, without a pillow or anything, and seem to sleep well enough that way. Some are young, some are old. There are long-haired ones and short-haired ones. There are really all varieties.

Well, my wife and I went into the A.S.P.C.A. and made our inquiries. The employees were very pleasant and told us what you have to do to get a dog. It seems that first they have to investigate your home to make sure that it will be nice for any dog they give you. We wondered what the investigators would think of our two little rooms, but we didn’t say anything. Then, too, the dog wasn’t quite free after all. Somehow, with the license and everything, it costs you three dollars.

We went in to look at the dogs. They set up an awful howl the minute they saw us. They were all so eager to be adopted that it nearly broke my wife’s heart. She would have liked to take them all out and set them loose in some kind of a dog’s

paradise at our expense. Anyway, the longer we looked the less possible it was for us to make up our minds. There were big dogs and little dogs, long-haired ones and short-haired ones. But they were all in the same cage and the big, hundred-pounders were just as pitiful as the little, weak three-pound ones.

There was a sign “no smoking” so we decided to go out in the street and have a cigarette and talk it over. Outside were some taxi-drivers. They were waiting around for those people who take their dogs home in taxis. Some bums were there too and I gave one of them a cigarette. He wasn’t a bad bum, he’d just had a bath, so I got to talking with him. I told him it was hard to select a dog and he sympathized with me at some length. Then I told him about the way they have to investigate your home and all, and about the three dollars. He was very sympathetic and understood just why everything had to be as it was.

Well, I don’t know how the idea ever came into my head, but I asked him if anybody who came around there ever suddenly decided to adopt a single, unemployed man instead of a dog. He said he didn’t know whether it had ever happened or not. Then I asked him what he thought of the idea of being adopted and he said he’d be very glad.

I told him we didn’t have much room and that he’d have to sleep on the floor. But he said that would be fine, he’d slept on floors a whole lot and didn’t mind it any longer. I told him we couldn’t afford to buy him expensive meats, and he said any old meat would be okay. He’d be glad to eat meat as a change from soup. I asked him a few more questions, more or less personal, and he answered them all very satisfactorily.

By now, it looked to me as though we could make some sort of a deal, but when I asked my wife she said she thought he was a little too big to have around the house. She thought we were going to have something a little smaller.

It made him very unhappy to hear my wife talking this way and he said he’d be glad to do anything at all that we asked him. He’d wear a muzzle and a leash and do anything else we wanted. He was really very anxious to be adopted.

But my wife said she thought we ought to think it over first and maybe look around a little more. I told her she could go and pick one out in the vacant lot over there, but she said she didn’t feel up to it right then.

Well, we just somehow couldn’t seem to make up our minds. We went back and looked at the dogs, and then looked over the bums again. Of course, what we really wanted all the time was a baby, but, as I said before, we can’t afford that. And we can’t afford the dog now either, because I gave some of the dog-license money to that man whom we didn’t adopt. Not only that, but I’m afraid that every time I go back there I’ll be giving dog-license money to some one of those fellows who sit there in the sun on the bath-house steps. HOWARD HAYES.

Washington Notes

*Mr. Green Wows the Resolutions Committee—
The Peace Conference Takes on Importance
—A World Boycott of Japan?*

ONE INCIDENT of the Republican national convention at Cleveland has received too little attention—the appearance of Mr. William Green before the resolutions committee. According to the story told in Washington, Mr. Green was coldly received by the Republicans. He was forced to stand in the rear of the meeting room for nearly an hour while lobbyists, mostly representing special business interests, made their pleas. A Republican youngster, acting as sergeant-at-arms, brusquely told him to stop whispering to Mr. Matthew Woll and Mr. William Morrison, who were with him. When he was finally permitted to speak, he was received with obvious hostility. Most of the committee members knew that he had declared for Mr. Roosevelt, and had supported almost all New Deal measures.

As he finished, however, Mr. S. W. Robinson, member of the resolutions committee from South Dakota, wished to know where Mr. Green stood on a constitutional amendment enabling states to enact minimum-wage laws, a subject he had not mentioned. Mr. Green said that the A.F. of L. favored minimum wages for women and children only, not for men. "The working men of this country are not ready to surrender themselves," he abruptly shouted. "Labor will depend on its own strength, on its right to strike. If the government receives the right to fix wages, as in some European countries, workers will have abandoned liberty, sacrificed freedom."

The members of the resolutions committee half rose to their feet with excitement. Hand-clapping broke out—by far the most vigorous applause given any speaker during the committee's session. Men slapped one another's backs. The representatives of two women's organizations who wished to protest against Mr. Green's sex discrimination were pulled back into their seats. In the rear of the room, the dark, handsome face of Mr. Woll, a lifelong Republican, glowed with pleasure.

Later in the day, Mr. Green explained that his remarks were not to be interpreted to mean that he had changed his position on the New Deal. But this seems to have been, in great part, a diplomatic denial. I am told that there could be no questioning of Mr. Green's sincerity before the resolutions committee. The words fairly leaped out of him in response to Mr. Robinson's chance question. The incident shows the hopeless split in the A.F. of L., and the Republicans' evident hope of taking advantage of it.

The Buenos Aires peace conference, the agenda for which is now being perfected, may prove to be a turning point in American foreign policy. It has been given a new and sudden importance by the threat of war in both Europe and the Orient. The administration's advisers are perhaps more generally concerned about Europe. Mr. Roosevelt himself is reported to feel that a European war is possible, and that, if it comes, it will present problems far outweighing any domestic issue. He is also resolved to

avoid the temporizing tactics of Mr. Wilson, and to keep the United States securely neutral. This is to be done by restricting our exports to belligerent countries to peacetime quantities—the same policy Mr. Hull attempted to enforce in the case of Italy at the start of the Ethiopian war.

The administration is obviously anxious to persuade the Latin American republics to take a similar stand. It is felt that United States farmers would submit more readily to this sort of partial embargo if they knew that Argentine beef ranchers and wheat growers, and Brazilian cotton planters, were making equal sacrifices. In particular, the administration would like to forestall a great increase of Brazil's cotton acreage under the stimulus of European war orders. It is also felt that we would be immensely strengthened in dealing with a belligerent Europe if we had the whole hemisphere arrayed behind us. When the time came to make peace our influence would be likewise enhanced.

Thoughts similar to these are in the minds of a majority of administration advisers. There seems to be, however, a minority that is not concerned with Europe at all, but with the Orient. Their purposes are very different. They were greatly impressed, last October, by the League's boycott of Italy, and have been considering the feasibility of a boycott of Japan. The relative failure of the Italian boycott has not discouraged them. They point out that there were no important commercial interests in Ethiopia, and, for that reason, the business men of Europe were, on the whole, opposed to sanctions. But if Japan should conquer and garrison China—and highly placed American diplomats believe that Japan would like to do exactly this—very large British, American and French business interests would be jeopardized. As long as Japan's action was against China rather than Soviet Russia, big business could undoubtedly be counted on to support sanctions of a far-reaching character. The United States, the British Empire including India, the Dutch empire and Latin America are Japan's great overseas markets. England controls the Far Eastern policy of the Netherlands; if the United States could control the policies of Latin America, England and the United States, acting together, could destroy Japan's foreign trade. It would be a far more potent weapon against Japan than the American and British fleets.

State Department officials who have considered the question of sanctions against Japan grimly refuse to discuss whether battleships would not be needed in the end. They admit that a boycott would almost certainly lead the Japanese to seize the Philippines and the British colony of Hongkong. But, they say, if Japan makes all China into another Manchukuo, it will march on to seize the Philippines and Hongkong anyhow, and after them the Dutch East Indies, Siam and conceivably India. Meantime, Japan has suddenly become aware of its vulnerability to sanctions—nowhere was the League's boycott of Italy studied more anxiously than in Tokyo—and this seems to have had a sobering effect on Japanese business men, although not on the military.

Perhaps talk about a world boycott of Japan need not be taken seriously at the moment. In a year or two, it may. But it is important to realize that the Buenos Aires conference has two distinct aspects. From one point of view, it is a far-sighted effort to keep this hemisphere out

of war in Europe. From another, it is an attempt to mobilize the hemisphere against Japan. In this duality, the administration's plan of an understanding with Latin America resembles all other alliances. All are for defense and peace, and equally all are for war.

Washington.

T. R. B.

Other People's Money

*If One Party Is Doomed, Which Is It?
—Parallels with Whigs and Liberals—
Men of Property Stand Together*

SOMEONE observed at Cleveland: "This is the beginning of the last battle between the two great parties." It may be so. But which one will disappear as a real contender? Most commentators now would say it will be the Republican Party. That too may be so, but we will have to look a little more narrowly into the seeds of time before we conclude that it will.

In 1848 the Whig Party won its great victory over the Democrats. With the irrepressible issue of slavery rising like a vast cloud over the horizon, the northern Whig Party nominated old Zachary Taylor, who had never voted in his life and was a large Southern slave-owner, against a Northern Democrat, Lewis Cass, who stood for "states' rights" and "squatter sovereignty." In this case, so confused were the issues that the Whig Party won a great victory and actually carried eight Southern states. Yet that was destined to be not only its last victory, but almost its dying gasp. It had ceased, despite the presence in it of some of the ablest leaders of those days—Webster, Clay and Seward—to be in touch with the time and its problems. At the next election Millard Fillmore, its candidate, got only eight electoral votes. At the election eight years after its great triumph it had no candidate of its own, merely endorsing the candidate of the Know-Nothings.

A similar fate overtook the Liberal Party in England. After its tremendous victory under Campbell-Bannerman it dominated the English scene in the years preceding the War and, like Woodrow Wilson, put into effect various political and social-welfare reforms. Its three premiers, Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith and Lloyd George, ruled England—with a coalition government under Lloyd George during the War—from 1906 to 1922. Who would have supposed in 1914 or in 1918, when Lloyd George was at the height of his popularity, that the party he headed would not only never elect another government, but would become a mere handful of futile members?

The reasons for the Liberal Party's disintegration are plain enough. And they are far more applicable to our own situation than was the Whig decay preceding the Civil War. For a century the Liberal Party in England had fought the battle of *political* liberalism—universal suffrage—and along with that, quite naturally, it had sought to ameliorate the condition of the working classes by various kinds of social-welfare devices. But the issue of universal suffrage is a thing of the past now in England and the old social-welfare contraptions have become as weak and inadequate as a bread poultice on a cancer. The times call for serious economic adjustments, for dealing with the

causes that underlie poverty and war and insecurity. The old Liberal Party was, of course, incapable of even thinking about these causes and so it passed out of the picture and made way for the Labor Party under MacDonald.

But if you will examine this history and the records of our own country preceding the Civil War, you see that the party which survived was the party which championed property rights. The Whigs, making brave gestures for the propertied groups on one side and equally brave but ambiguous gestures for the groups that championed human freedom, went down before the Democratic Party of Pierce and Buchanan, which stood solidly for the propertied classes of both South and North. In England it was the Liberal Party, fumbling around for remedies for diseases it did not understand, that went into the discard, while the party of property remained. I do not mean that the party of property remained was always victorious. But it survived.

And so it will be with us. For, say what you will of the confusions of these tory minds, there are a few points on which they have no bewilderment. They stumble and talk nonsense in their effort to appear liberal and to hold the support of the disaffected pressure groups whose votes are essential to their success. But in the main, whatever fold their platforms speak, they know that they are for the men who own property, for preserving all the elements in our institutions that protect property and the status quo. And there is always a large set of customers for such a party. The groups that change are the liberal and radical groups. The liberalism of yesterday, with its emphasis on political freedom and social welfare—the doctrine that the rich should be good to the poor—no longer has any validity. Now we are face to face with an economic machine which doesn't work, which needs to be changed and which millions of men are coming dimly to understand. They want economic, not mere political and social rearrangements.

To make up your mind which party will survive you have to decide which party is logically and naturally the party of the conservatives and of property. This one will go on. The other will die.

Can anyone doubt that it is the Republican Party which most nearly conforms to this description? Is not the Democratic Party like the Liberal Party? Is it not made up of well-to-do dukes, lords, rentiers of a benevolent turn, cherishing an intellectual liberalism and standing on one set of principles to please the small property holders and the benevolent large ones while at the same time playing with poultices and plasters and narcotics in the field of economic disease? Is it not also like the old Whig Party in this: that it tried to hold the faith of slave-holders in the South and the property-holders in the North and retain at the same time the immense army of men everywhere who were calling for an end to the extension of slavery?

There are many more factors in this picture which there is no time to examine here. But one may well hesitate before predicting with assurance that the Republican Party is dead. Perhaps it is the Democratic Party that is dying. Its present healthy appearance may be merely the flush of the fatal fever. Can the Bourbon South, the agrarian West and the growing radicalism of the industrial North be kept together in a single party? I do not think so. But I know that men of property can always be depended upon to unite.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

Wings Over Nothing

SECRET AGENT" is a Gaumont-British film on the old formula of love and spies and wartime. But it is the work of Alfred Hitchcock—which makes all the difference. The rapid development of this genius in the form—his eternal inventive sense, wit and good taste and flair for swift, open movement—is already making some big names look rather lower-case. Mainly against him so far is his material (easier to concentrate on good effects if you don't have to make your story come out even). In "The Man Who Knew Too Much" the story about the people shown was so unlikely and maudlin as to spoil the picture for me—even if there hadn't been an amateurishness about much of the direction that can only be explained now by crediting Hitchcock with the rare quality of developing his strong points to the exclusion of all else. "The 39 Steps" went far beyond this: it was a delightful film, really a miracle of speed and light. But its story was hokum, you had to accept that at the start and keep on accepting.

And now in "Secret Agent" there are still a lot of holes—the hero's squeamishness, unlikely in wartime; the general reluctance of deadly enemies to kill anybody who would interfere with plot development; the British War Office's cueing in feminine interest by sending some silly society girl out to ball up deadly missions and practically lose the War. But in general there is a lot of sounder stuff—still on the surface, but present at least and with motivations. Madeleine Carroll makes fine capital of her first breakdown and subsequent near-hysteria. And John Gielgud is right for the character of one of those backbones of empire, brave and decent enough to get into a horrible spot of conflicting loyalties (Dash it, man, and all that).

Best of all is Peter Lorre's study of the assassin as artist. As satyr, humorist and lethal snake, he shows, here as always, a complete feeling for the real juice of situations and the best way of distilling this through voice, carriage, motion. He is one of the true characters of the theatre, having mastered loose oddities and disfigurements until the total is a style, childlike, beautiful, unfathomably wicked, always hinting at things it would not be good to know.

His style is most happily luminous in the intense focus and supple motion of movie cameras, for the keynote of any scene can be made visual through him. In close-ups, it is through the subtle shifts of eyes, scalp, mouth lines, the intricate relations of head to shoulders and shoulders to body. In medium-shots of groups, it is through his entire motion as a sort of supreme punctuation mark and underlining. A harmless statement is thrown off in a low voice, and it is felt like the cut of a razor in Lorre, immediately in motion—the eyes in his head and the head on his shoulders and that breathless caged walk raising a period to double exclamation points. Or the wrong question is asked, and the whole figure freezes, dead stop, and then the eventual flowering of false warmth, the ice within it.

And Alfred Hitchcock is the kind of director who can make the finest use of such character effects, neither exploiting nor restricting. The vital imagination behind almost every detail shows in the fleet economy of the opening sequence: the false funeral, the Chief, the mission. It seems hardly three minutes before everything is known, and

the scene gathers itself into premonition merely through the wide, dark flight of stairs being seen from that angle, with the men at the top. Then the scream, the horrified servant girl running up, then back to the door and Secret Agent Peter Lorre in hot and sly pursuit—a perfect entrance.

All the usual expository sediment of a play, that is, runs off in solution like brook water here; and presently we are in Switzerland, spy meets girl-spy with some fetching and varnished by-play, and here is Lorre again, barking like a spaniel, breathless with the devastation brought about in him by sight of anything wearing pants that don't show, and already established as a major and mysterious force. And then the absolutely stunning sequence in the church. The organist being their agent, they come in, light the candle signal, wait and wait, and there is no answer but the sustained organ chord of minor thirds, which swells and becomes tremendous as they creep up on the organist, to find him strangled across his keys. There follows the flight to the belfry and that beautiful shot looking down from there—the space and dwarfed perspective, the twisted form sprawled on the stones and the pulling of the bell rope.

After this comes one of the finest suspense foundations I know of: their singling out the wrong man and hoaxing him up the mountain to his certain death. The hard intention is set off against the humor on the surface, the act against the result. The mountain, Gielgud's revulsion and quitting of the expedition to watch through a telescope, the house back home with the wife complacent in her German conversation class but anxious over the husband's dog, who worries the door and whines—and the visual bridge between these in Madeleine Carroll. And finally the three scenes merge in one as the act is framed in the telescope, a terrible moment of space and falling and cloud-shadows over the snow, the dog's howl rising over the picture above and bringing the camera back to the quiet, terrified home scene below.

There is no space for going into the manner in which superimposed images, throwbacks in character, blended contrasts and camera positions and well paced cutting, constantly heighten effects. Or for any analysis of just how Hitchcock and his camera man can load the simple entry of a building with suspense and terror. But something should be said of the use of sound, which is not equaled anywhere else: the music in the church, the howl of the dog, the disembodied voice in the rhythm of the train wheels (he mustn't, he mustn't, he mustn't, he mustn't), the deafening factory and steeple-bell noises, etc. Then there is the growing discord of the peasant-dance scene, after the murder, where the voices go from sweet to wild and the accompaniment becomes the metallic scream of coins whirling in bowls.

In all matters of treatment, the director of this film hardly has a rival. And whatever may be said for the boys who start out with a conviction and philosophical good will large enough to cancel out all the unimaginative heaviness of their execution, I still think Hitchcock should be rated among the best if only for what he can teach them. In a latter-day fashion, he is a pioneer of the movie, increasing the range of its plasticity and power: he can take something that is practically nothing and make it seem like music and give it wings.

OTIS FERGUSON.

The Bandwagon

Take the money out of this New Deal and 90 percent of the converts to it will become good Americans overnight.—*United States Senator Lester J. Dickinson, from Iowa, reported in The Congressional Record.*

James A. Farley [if he came to the Republican Convention] could walk through the present assemblage right now waving a sheaf of jobs and walk off with the whole show, leaving the Grand Old Party without a quorum.—*Westbrook Pegler in his syndicated daily column.*

The Ku Klux Klan is opposed to terrorism and does not believe in any illegal action for any cause whatsoever.—*Hiram W. Evans, Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, as interviewed by the Associated Press.*

It was not the munitions makers nor the steel trust nor the capitalists, but the pacifists that forced us into the World War. And they will get us into the next one.—*Editorial in The Gazette-Times, Corvallis, Oregon.*

HIS WONDERS TO PERFORM

Devar Surya Sena of Colombo, Ceylon, a partisan of nationalist opposition to the British rule, said, "I resented being considered a subject race until I encountered the Oxford Group, but now I have discovered that my exalted ego was my worst enemy, not the English."

Charles Hogan, New York butcher, said: "I now can see that God has a plan for business. At first I thought my difficulties were the result of circumstances that I could do nothing about. But through the Oxford Group God showed me that while I was in the meat business he had a job for me to do. I now manage a butcher shop on a

guided basis and find that it is the only answer for business today."

Miss Marion Clayton Anderson, film actress, who played one of the ingenue roles in "Mutiny on the Bounty," said she was guided by God in trying out for the part against others.

"I took time off from studying the part," she said, "to listen to what God had to tell me. All fear of competition disappeared."—*From various news accounts of the recent national assembly of the Oxford Group.*

MIX WELL AND SERVE WITH SOME HALF-CRACKED ICE

From a speech by James T. Watt: "I believe honestly the Oxford Group includes the best elements of communism, the best elements of fascism, the best elements of all that stands for conservatism in the world, and is the only revolution for the society in which we live."

BEAVER!

Mr. Emerson is an authority on communism. He has made probably the most extensive survey of communistic activities of any man in the state. During labor trouble he donned overalls and let his beard grow that he might mingle with the leaders in communistic movements.—*News item in the Spokane, Washington, Daily Chronicle, referring to J. N. Emerson, Republican State Chairman.*

ANOTHER SUCH VICTORY, AND THE WAR IS LOST

French strike is broken on union terms.—*Headline in The New York Herald Tribune.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and \$1 will be paid for each item used. Address the Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E

News from Moscow

SIR: A chemist in Russia, on leave of absence from his job in a New York research laboratory, recently sent two of his former superiors a letter that—judging from the comments George Soule's and Edmund Wilson's articles have evoked during the past few months—should interest many readers.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

FRANK WILEN.

[ENCLOSURE]

Moscow, 3-30, '36.

I hadn't been here three weeks when I was offered a job as research chemist in the chemical-pharmaceutical research institute. I have been working here now for two months, and I think I am going to like it. The nature of the work is similar to that at—, but they are more interested in anti-malarials, anthelmintics and remedies against tropical diseases, which are prevalent in the Middle Asiatic parts of the Soviet Union. I am in charge of a separate laboratory, which so far consists of myself, a chemist and a laboratory assistant, but the laboratory will grow as the work develops.

I was interested to find that the Russian chemists know their stuff, and work hard and with enthusiasm. Detailed plans for each quarter of the year are worked out and presented to the director. Within the laboratories plans are made for each month, and so far as possible each evening a plan is worked out for the following day, and all preparatory work done the evening before. This will delight—, who always insisted on proper planning of each

day's work. Great publicity is given to those who have fulfilled their quarterly plan and especially to those who have over-fulfilled it. The incentive is provided not so much through increases in pay as through personal distinction, and through the consciousness that one has done something for the country and for the people. If you have worked out a worth-while product, there is no delay in putting it into production, and the papers will write about it and about you, and you feel not only that full credit is given you, but that you have actually contributed to the well-being of the population.

Our institute is the central research institute for the whole chemical-pharmaceutical industry of the Soviet Union. It is as if all the research laboratories of the United States firms were to combine into one research body. There is thus no duplication of effort and no waste of work. There are over 250 chemists, biologists, bacteriologists, physicians, etc., working here, not counting assistants of all sorts. The building occupies a square block and is four stories high. All the biological testing is done on the premises. The work is done in separate laboratories, four to five chemists to a laboratory. The place is kept clean by a lot of charwomen, and all your glassware is washed for you. Also all your analytical work is done by the Analytical Division. The factories have their own analytical and experimental laboratories. The Russians import hardly any pharmaceuticals. All the standard pharmaceuticals such as aspirin, pyramidon, arsphenamine, novocain, veronal, etc., are produced in the Soviet Union, along with a great many others. Cosmetics are produced by a different organization, and we are not concerned with it. We work six hours a day, five days, and

have the sixth off. There are no unemployed chemists, or unemployed of any kind. There is also no fear of losing one's job....

As for myself—I am living in the country with my brother's family, forty minutes by train from Moscow. We live practically in the middle of a fine woods in quite rustic surroundings. It is beautiful here in the winter with the trees laden with snow and the sun sparkling on it. And it will be more beautiful here in the summer. . . . My brother's kids are having here a hell of a good time what with skiing and sledding, and no danger of being run over by automobiles (there are no automobiles for miles around).

Victims of Silicosis

SIR: In connection with the Gauley Bridge tragedy I am sure that many of your readers would appreciate information that would make possible a comparison of the (estimated) total number of men killed with the average number of men employed on the project at a time; and also the wages that induced these men to march to death in relays. About how much did the contractors expect to get for the job and approximately how much profit did they hope to realize?

Peshigo, Wis.

T. A. WILLARD.

[A reliable investigator reports to us that the project employed an average daily force of 2,500 men, with 4,000 as the total number who worked upon it at one time or another. The estimated deaths, to date, have been 475, plus those who are still alive but incurably ill. Wages were \$3 for a thirteen-hour day for semi-skilled laborers; most of the workers were in this category. Contractor's figures as to expenses and profits are not available, but the cost of the entire project was estimated at \$20,000,000.—THE EDITORS.]

Mrs. Kemble and Slavery

SIR: Mr. Stark Young, in your issue of May 27, refers to Fanny Kemble's Georgia diary as "republished by Henry Ward Beecher for propaganda purposes during the War between the States." He makes a number of other statements, particularly one suggesting that Mrs. Kemble later repented her well known views on the South and slavery, which are at variance with the known facts.

If Mrs. Kemble ever recanted these views, the fact escaped her biographers. Mr. Young bases his statement about this on alleged conversations with Mrs. Kemble reported by two stanch Southerners. According to the first, Mr. James Dent of Hofwyl Plantation, Georgia, Mrs. Kemble (at the age of eighty-one), unburdened herself to him as follows:

I was a young and passionate woman. I have bitterly regretted many things I wrote in that book. I do not mean that my attitude on slavery has changed. No, that is the same. [Two sentences unaccountably overlooked by Mr. Young.] But when I think of...the war, I have much to be sorry for.

The second part of the statement quoted by Mr. Young is attributed to Mrs. Kemble by Mrs. Georgia King Wilder of Savannah.

Assuming that both these witnesses heard and quoted Mrs. Kemble correctly, it seems a little odd that she should tell Mr. Dent that her attitude on slavery was unchanged and at almost the same time say to Mrs. Wilder that she had been a "fanatic." Was the old lady's mind failing? If she did regret anything she wrote in the Georgia journal, she did not, so far as I know, express this regret in writing, then or later. On the contrary.

I would like to know on what Mr. Young bases his statement that the Georgia journal was republished by Beecher. This again is a fact which has escaped both Mrs. Kemble's biographers and Beecher's. The American edition was brought out by Harper and Brothers. Mrs. Kemble's own statement, published in 1884, attributed its republication in America to her friend, John North.

As to "all the freed slaves who of themselves returned to Butler's Island Plantation, thus resuming their misery." They returned, as so many other freed slaves did, not from any attachment to the "peculiar institution," but to find their relatives and take up life in the place where they had known it. They were

not in this resuming their misery, for their misery was slavery and they were, or so they believed, free. If Mrs. Kemble's daughter, Mrs. Leigh, is to be believed, this was *her misery*. She found them "insolent," inflamed by "outside agitators" and especially "idle" (unwilling to work for her on her terms). In 1859 she wrote to her mother complaining of this idleness and disaffection among the freed men, but Mrs. Kemble unsympathetically held that the South's troubles were due to the earlier "evil deeds" of its inhabitants and might be expected to last "a good half-century yet." "It is unlucky, no doubt," she adds (in this letter, published when she was eighty-two), "for the present holders of Southern property, but the world has laws and I do not know that the planters of the Southern states were sufficiently meritorious folk to have earned a miracle, especially a very immoral one, for their heirs."

If this be repentance Mr. Young certainly makes the most of it! New York City.

MARTHA GRUENING.

[My intention at least was to imply that the statements were drawn from the book under discussion. I have no way of knowing to what extent Mr. Dent and Mrs. Wilder are authorities on their own recollections. But it is obvious that being a fanatic and not endorsing slavery are two different things. Even Mrs. Kemble "at the age of eighty-one" or "when she was eighty-two" understood that. A real item, however, is that the book's title made me speak of Georgia sunshine, when I meant South Carolina.—S. Y.]

Pro but Not Contact

SIR: Yours against "contact" and "reportage" and generally pro-New Republic.

Westport, Conn.

VAN WYCK BROOKS.

A Marxian Quarterly

SIR: Science and Society: A Marxian Quarterly has been founded as a response to the growing interest in theoretical Marxism, particularly among the young people in our colleges, both faculty and students. The world crisis, the threat of fascism and war, and the achievements of the Soviet Revolution have aroused a deep interest in the principles of Marxism. It is highly desirable not only to provide an organ for theoretical studies in response to this interest, but also to stimulate our university men and women to make fresh analyses, from the Marxian point of view, in politics, economics, history, the sciences, literature and the arts.

The magazine will make its first appearance this fall. The editors would be glad to receive word concerning suitable manuscripts. Subscription, one dollar a year. A prospectus will be sent on request. Please address all communications to W. T. Parry, managing editor, 6½ Holyoke Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Cambridge, Mass.

W. T. PARRY.

"A Modern Book of Esthetics"

SIR: I cannot wholly agree with Professor Paul Weiss in his review of my anthology, "A Modern Book of Esthetics" [New Republic, April 22]. He believes that the esthetician should "neglect the art object" so as to concentrate upon such abstractions as "production," "meaning," "form" and "judgment." But how can these abstractions, which apply also in science, politics and elsewhere, be precisely applied to art without an understanding of art itself?

Professor Weiss cites Kant and Dewey as notable estheticians who lacked a feeling for art; but Dewey's book discloses a catholic appreciation of art, and Kant's argument is damaged by its very abstract formalism. Also Professor Weiss cannot prove that esthetics is "overrun" with "discredited theories" by citing such doctrines as hedonism (Santayana) or the wish-fulfilment theory (Freud and De Witt), since these theories are still ably defended by men of authority outside the field of esthetics. Throughout his review Professor Weiss reveals the bias of the formal logician whose interest in esthetics is subordinate.

Moreover, he overlooks the fact that my "summaries" and Introduction, though perhaps superfluous for the sophisticated

reader, were designed to ease the way into material difficult for the undergraduate. He wonders why I included Clive Bell. I agree with him that Bell is a "feeble" thinker (I point this out in a note to Bell's essay), yet I included him because he uniquely represents an influential standpoint, which has great illustrative value in the classroom.

Seattle, Wash.

MELVIN M. RADER.

SIR: Obviously, it is esthetic judgment, etc., not judgment in general, with which esthetics is concerned. And surely, one does not consult Freud to discover whether or not the theory of wish fulfillment is tenable.

Many professors underestimate the intelligence of undergraduates. I still think that inconsequential introductions and feeble theories have as little place inside the classroom as outside it.

Bryn Mawr, Pa.

PAUL WEISS.

He's Been Working on the Railroad

SIR: Old South Chicago has stirred out of her long sleep and the smoke of industry is evident in all directions. The steel mills are hiring, the railroads are retaining their men. Over in Duffy's Tavern, one of Irondale's oldest institutions, the cash-register seems trying to emulate a crossing gong. It seems that the depression is over; and yet, pessimistic from experiences of the past, I'm often inclined to believe the thing will blow up. I've seen too many booms . . . long hours and big checks . . . you begin paying debts . . . buying Florsheim's instead of Kinney's . . . trading in the old ticker for a new sixty-hour clock . . . poking holes in your good Stetson so that it will be cooler for work . . . visiting a tailor . . . looking twice at some good-looking girl. Then (Oh, hell!) the next thing you know you're riding down some main line. "Yeah, brother, they say the Mop's hirin' out o' K. C."

Chicago, Ill.

TOM ROONEY.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Robert G. Spivack, editor of the University of Cincinnati Bearcat, writes us to correct the impression given in the press that the Black Legion sponsored the strike of onion workers in Hardin County, Ohio, in the summer of 1934. During his conversations with strikers and their leader, he says he was informed that a group calling themselves the Black Shirts, who he now believes were probably the same as the Black Legion, had offered to sell weapons and dynamite to the strikers. The strikers told him that they refused to have any dealings with them. Mr. Spivack has sent this information to Governor Martin Davey, asking an investigation, a proposal that was recently rejected by the state senate.

The General Defense Committee of the I.W.W., 2422 N. Halsted Street, Chicago, Illinois, sends us an appeal for funds to take the case of Mike Lindway to the United States Supreme Court. They say that the evidence which convicted him, alleged to have been found in his home, was seized without warrant or witnesses, and that if such evidence is admissible, it will hereafter be very easy to plant evidence on anyone. . . . The Ferrero-Sallitto Defense Committee sends us a copy of a letter Domenick Sallitto has written to Secretary Perkins in which he asks that she produce proof of the charges against him. She had previously said that when such charges were supported by evidence she could not avert deportation. The Defense Committee urges that others send the same request to her. . . . The International Labor Defense sends us a pamphlet of the John Crempa Defense Committee, 206 Market Street, Newark, New Jersey, which reviews the history of the case. Mrs. Crempa was shot by deputies, who were acquitted of manslaughter, and charges are now pending against John Crempa, his son and brother-in-law. The Defense Committee is attempting to obtain 100,000 signatures on a petition to Governor Hoffman demanding an investigation of the case.

We have received an announcement from Little, Brown and Company of the first novelette prize contest ever conducted by an American publisher with book publication the aim. The company is offering \$2,500 "for the most interesting unpublished work of fiction, between 15,000 and 35,000 words in length, submitted before January 1, 1937." For full particulars write: Novelette Prize Contest, Little Brown and Company, 34 Beacon Street, Boston.

Mr. C. M. Whitlow, superintendent of the Cheyenne County High School at Cheyenne Wells, Colorado, has written us concerning a free copy of Arthur Pound's "Industrial America" which his school's library received from The Atlantic Monthly Company. Since it seemed to him that the book could properly be described as propaganda, he wrote the company inquiring as to who had paid for what seemed to be a fairly wide free distribution, but he received no answer. While not giving a specific answer to our inquiry, The Atlantic Monthly replied that the fundamental question was the value of the book itself, that it would fall by its own weight if it was bad, and that they thought it "a fair presentation of one side of the picture which should not be overlooked in these changeful days. . . ." They enclosed samples of two statements which were sent out with the book, the first stating that by this presentation of twelve studies of large American corporations they felt they were contributing to recovery and the return of confidence, and the second, which was bound in the book, indicating that these case-studies were prepared with the assistance and active cooperation of the corporations treated.

The National Council on Freedom from Censorship informs us of a proposed ordinance prohibiting the use of profanity on the New York stage and requests that protests be sent to Henry Imre Kohn, Examiner, President's Office, Board of Aldermen, City Hall, New York City. Sufficient protest will prevent the ordinance from being introduced, but if introduced it is likely to pass.

A letter from the City Projects Council of New York City criticizes the section of our recent "Balance Sheet of the New Deal" that dealt with the W.P.A., quoting Mr. Harry Hopkins' testimony before a House Committee to the effect that the W.P.A. was only intended to put 2,300,000 persons to work, whereas we gave the figure as 3,500,000. This was the figure for all government agencies. They declare, too, that the ruling of November 1, which set a date beyond which those on home relief could not get on the W.P.A., is evidence that Mr. Hopkins did not intend to employ one person from 3,500,000 families. . . . Robert W. Dunn of the Labor Research Association writes that some figures in our recent editorial, "Whose National Guard?", are open to misconception, although they are technically correct. He points out that when troops were called out on successive days for the same strike they were listed by the War Department as separate instances, and that when state troops had been called out they were not listed. He gives the correct figures for the number of times troops were called in on labor, unemployed and farm struggles as: 1933, 17; 1934, 24; 1935, 19.

The Champion of Youth, a new magazine "devoted to the interests of America's young people," invites contributors of all ages to address The Champion, 2 East Twenty-third Street, New York City. . . . The Southern Masses, published weekly at High Point, North Carolina, under the slogan "The Voice of the Underprivileged in the South," invites volunteer correspondents from anywhere in the South. . . . The League for Southern Labor has sent us its publication, The South Today, and urges readers who would like to cooperate actively in its work to communicate with the League at 604 Steinway Hall, 113 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York City. . . . The Cooperative Review, a new national non-profit weekly news letter, asks all groups and individuals interested in the consumers' cooperative movement as a force for social action to address them at the Insurance Building, Washington, D. C.

What's on the Air?

Secretary Ickes makes an address at the dedication of houses erected in Harlem by the Federal Housing Administration. Mayor LaGuardia and Senator Robert F. Wagner also speak. Saturday, June 20, 11 to 11:15 A. M., N.B.C.-WJZ.

Harry L. Hopkins, chief of the W.P.A., holds a radio "staff meeting." Saturday, June 20, 5 to 5:30 P. M., N.B.C.-WEAF.

Both major networks broadcast intermittently the proceedings of the Democratic National Convention beginning Tuesday, June 23.

The Communist National Convention, including the speech of acceptance by the nominee for President, is broadcast from Madison Square Garden in New York City. Sunday, June 28, 5 to 6 P. M., N.B.C.-WJZ.

All times given are Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

Summer Book Section

The Octogenarian Shaw¹

IT CANNOT be denied, I am afraid, that Bernard Shaw is showing signs of old age. He kept his form, it seemed to me, through "The Apple Cart"; and "On the Rocks" and "Too True to Be Good" had their moments; but "The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles" strikes me—it is the first play of Shaw's which has struck me—as downright pointless and silly. These later plays start off rather well; but they tend to lose their direction: the unexpected turns which in the earlier plays used to shoot out as organic branches of the subject and amplify it more and more richly, are now by-paths which lead far afield and then do not seem to land us anywhere. Yet the openings—the skit on the decay of the British Empire in the prologue to "The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles," the knock-about domestic agonies of the first act or two of "The Millionairess"—still explode their comic situations with something of the old energy and wit. And the one-acter, "The Six of Calais," though it does not crackle with quite the old spark, is not far inferior to such an earlier trifle as "How He Lied to Her Husband."

It is interesting to see that the pure comic gift is the last thing which remains with Bernard Shaw. I have always believed that the judgment on him of the future would reverse the common opinion of his own time. It is always being said of him that he is primarily not an artist but a promulgator of ideas. The truth is, I think, that he is a considerable artist, but that his ideas on politics and society—that is, the specific programs and opinions which he has set forth in his prefaces and his journalism, as distinguished from the general philosophy which gives validity to his point of view—have always been ambiguous and confused.

As he grows older and the world changes violently from that to which he originally adapted his attitudes, the inadequacy of these attitudes becomes more obvious. What is needed for a real discussion of Shaw but what, so far as I know, has never yet been undertaken, is a study of his relation to Marxism: how did the Fabian modification of Marxism take its direction from the British Empire in the last half of the nineteenth century and how, in Shaw's case, was Fabianism specially modified by an Irishman and a romantic temperament? As for the Fabians, their special brand of Marxism has been subjected to a Marxist criticism by Mr. Mark Starr. In the eighties, says Mr. Starr (in the English labor magazine, *The Plebs*, May, 1921), British industrial domination was being challenged by America and Germany; the development of large-scale industry was eliminating competition and making municipal ownership seem desirable to the lower layers of the middle class; to the wage-worker, it made very little difference whether he was exploited by the company or the State. Therefore, the socialism generated at that time laid its emphasis on a socialist nationalization which was to be accom-

plished by experts, "permeating" government and business, invading Whitehall "armed with notebooks" and noiseless "in rubber-soled shoes," and setting up state departments which should put socialist ideas into effect. The action of the masses was not invoked, the class struggle was dismissed as a myth, and Marx's Labor Theory of Value, by the legerdmain of the English economist Jevons, was transformed into a Consumer Theory of Value. Now Bernard Shaw, brought up on Italian opera, full of the heroics of Beethoven and Wagner, approaching nineteenth-century England from the critical point of view of an Irishman yet a disinherited member of the Irish Protestant upper-middle class and with a propensity to governing-class psychology, always liable to shoulder its way to the front after a youth spent in poverty and obscurity, took from Marx an analysis of society which enabled him to give his comedies structure, serving him in literature, as he said, as the study of anatomy served Michael Angelo, yet has always remained susceptible to being carried away by romantic individualism and into prefiguring the savior of society as a hero-despot—Caesar, Mussolini—rather than as a revolutionary leader.

In the prefaces to these recent plays, Shaw's confusions appear more plainly on the surface than they have perhaps ever done before. As the pace of his mind slackens and the texture of his prose becomes less tight, the various ideas which make the conflict of his dramas but the chaos of his thought, fall apart. In the "Preface on Days of Judgment" to "The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles," he expounds his play as a demonstration of what would happen to the British Empire if the privilege of survival in society were made to depend on social utility—as it has been aimed to make it in Soviet Russia. But by setting up a theocratic tribunal instead of a Marxist one, he provides only a moral so generalized that it would be as easy for the Fascists to apply it as the Communists. "To me," he says, "this vision is childish; but I must take people's minds as I find them and build on them as best I can. It is no use my telling them that their vision of judgment is a silly superstition, and that there never will be anything of the kind." Since when has Bernard Shaw been resigned to taking people's minds as he found them? And why should he delegate to a God in whom he does not believe verdicts which must be passed by human beings and which must be based upon some definite conception of the structure of actual society?

And so in the "Preface to Bosses" to "The Millionairess," he talks about "beginning a Reformation well to the left of Russia," yet manages to discuss, and to glorify, Hitler and Mussolini without subjecting them to Marxist analysis at all. This is his version of the rise of Mussolini: "Here was clearly a big opportunity for a man psychologist enough to grasp the situation and bold enough to act on it. Such a man was Mussolini. He had become known as a journalist by championing the demobilized soldiers, who, after suffering all the horrors of war, had returned to find that the men who had been kept at home in the factories comfortably earning good wages, had seized those factories according to the Syndicalist doctrine of 'workers' control,' and were wrecking them in their helpless ignorance of business. As one indignant master-Fascist said to me, 'They were listen-

¹ The Simpleton of the Unexpected Isles, The Six of Calais, The Millionairess: Three New Plays, by Bernard Shaw. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. 210 pages. \$2.50.

ing to speeches around red flags and leaving the cows unmilked.'

"The demobilized fell on the Syndicalists with sticks and stones. Some, more merciful, only dosed them with castor oil. They carried Mussolini to Rome with a rush. This gave him the chance of making an irreparable mistake and spending the next fifteen years in prison. It seemed just the occasion for a grand appeal for liberty, for democracy, for a parliament in which the people were supreme: in short, for nineteenth-century resurrection pie. Mussolini did not make that mistake. With inspired precision he denounced liberty as a putrefying corpse. He declared that what people needed was not liberty but discipline, the sterner the better. He said that he would not tolerate Oppositions: he called for action and silence. The people, instead of being shocked like good liberals, rose to him. He was able to organize a special constabulary who wore black shirts and applied the necessary coercion." (Since then, Bernard Shaw, who, at an earlier phase, was writing eloquently in favor of the League of Nations, has been defending Mussolini in Ethiopia, on the same grounds as those on which he defended the British in South Africa at the time of the Boer War: that they were bringing civilization to backward races; and insisting that the League of Nations should never have tried to interfere.) He is not quite so enthusiastic about Hitler, but he asserts that "Herr Hitler is not a stupid German." If Hitler is not a stupid German, it is only because he is a crazy Austrian. Hitler's persecution of the Jews, instead of being referred directly to its social-economic sources, is described as "a craze, a complex, a bee in his bonnet, a hole in his armor, a hitch in his statesmanship, one of those lesions which sometimes prove fatal."

Yet the old man is nearly eighty and is outliving intellectually as well as physically all the rest of his literary generation. And, after all, the methods we use to check him were partly learned in his school.

EDMUND WILSON.

Stealing a Continent

The Rape of Africa, by Lamar Middleton. New York: Random House. 331 pages. \$3.

PROFESSIONAL historians will not like Mr. Middleton's book. It has long been a point of honor with historians trained in modern seminar methods to allow themselves no expression of moral indignation. They seek the aloofness and imperturbability of the biologist who dissects bugs or the geologist who hammers stones. The difficulty is that history does not deal simply with bugs and stones, but with human beings; and if it is written honestly and truthfully, it is impossible to be entirely and continuously unperturbed or to avoid sometimes getting plain mad. Of course, if the indignation precedes a knowledge of the facts, or supplants honest and endless effort to know the truth, history becomes a dangerous pastime—but surely no more dangerous than the attitude of those oblivious to human suffering, who write history in terms of material production and military power. If, after studying the history of Africa in the last sixty years, and studying it carefully and exhaustively, a writer can put down these facts with cold detachment, without bias or moral indignation, he is not a human being. The object of many historians seems to be just that: to avoid being human.

"The Rape of Africa" is a horrible tale, even when its

worst chapter is left out. Mr. Middleton does not, for instance, attempt to touch the slave trade: that extraordinary and unforgettable degradation of a continent which characterized the centuries that produced Raphael, Luther, Corneille, Shakespeare and Milton; the centuries that witnessed the greatest growth and triumph of the Christian churches.

Mr. Middleton begins with the partition of Africa in 1877, after the slave trade was practically ended. He follows the establishment of the Congo Free State, the seizure of the diamonds and coal of South Africa, the fight over the Nile Valley, the Berlin Conference, the black Mahdi and the loss and recapture of Khartum. He traces the red path of the British East Africa Company; the Italo-Abyssinian Treaty of Uccialli; the ruthless dreams of Cecil Rhodes; the scramble for Morocco; and he ends it all with the World War and Treaty of Versailles. I might quote one of a score of illustrious facts, one that concerns Egypt in 1885:

Every political and economic consideration demanded that Britain remain top-dog in Egypt; any ethical consideration of what right England had at all in the country, or for that matter anywhere else in Africa, was of course irrelevant, and in the middle-class mind at home a thought both disloyal and impertinent. With the revealing directness characteristic of the best of his documents, Granville countered the renewed discontent of the Egyptians with the observation that "it should be made clear to the Egyptian ministers and governors of the provinces that the responsibility which for the time rests on England obliges Her Majesty's Government to insist on the adoption of the policy which they recommend; and that it will be necessary that those ministers and governors who do not follow this course should cease to hold office."

Mr. Middleton came to the conclusion with which many others have agreed: that the seed of world war was and is today in Africa. The reason is that the degradation of a race and the exploitation of a continent, like the degradation and exploitation of an industrial class, are direct bids for crime and for the envious fighting and suicide based on the loot of crime.

What we somehow fail to remember is that cruelties and crimes like those perpetrated in Africa are partly a direct result of that so-called scientific attitude of the writers of history, who tell the story of European imperialism in such a way that the average citizen of England, France and Germany regards it as a fine and glorious thing and a wonderful expansion of civilization. And Mr. Middleton telling this story, frankly and in popular phrase, with no biting of tongue, gets indignant about it. His indignation rises to a climax in his final words:

The drift to war over Africa is unmistakable. That cheering outlook is the result of sixty years of duplicity and chicanery practised by the chancelleries of Europe. If a continent has been stolen from 140,000,000 natives, it is assuaging to remember that the fraud was committed in the holy cause of civilization; and that in compensation the African is tasting the transcendent delights of chain-gangs, taxes, military conscriptions, missionaries, flogging, gin, rum, jack-in-the-boxes and other boons of Occidental invention.

I agree with Mr. Middleton. I think he has done a fine job, and I would to God that hundreds of thousands of Americans had the courage at least to read his story.

W. E. B. Du Bois.

A Sour Note on Literary Criticism

A Note on Literary Criticism, by James T. Farrell. New York: The Vanguard Press. 221 pages. \$2.50.

FARRELL has written in defense of what he calls "pluralism" in literature. The substance of his position is in his expression, the "carry-over value of literature," referring to the fact that, although a work of art be built to emphasize *one* point of view, its appeal may so "carry over" that it can be enjoyed by people with *another* point of view. Different periods of history, or different classes in a given period, or different individuals in a given class, bring out particular emphases in the selection of their artistic materials. But these emphases are not mutually exclusive. There is a margin of overlap among them. The skeptic de Gourmont, for instance, found much in the literature of the Church that impinged upon his own interests.

The basis of Farrell's book, if I have stated it correctly, is highly agreeable to me. And I beg to be enrolled as a fellow pluralist on the subject of literary appeal, offering in support of my candidacy my discussions of "recurrent patterns of experience" and the "margin of persuasion" or overlap, as formulated in "Counter-Statement." As one who has reluctantly made the "dialectical" admission that the same work of art may have a progressive effect at one time and a reactionary effect at other times, I am conquered in advance. So surprising are the destinies of literary effectiveness, that I have wondered, in perverse moments, whether our commercial advertising might not be one of the most powerful forces making for revolution in America, since advertising stimulates with scientific efficiency expensive appetites that the "inner contradictions" of capitalist economy must frequently leave ungratified.

If one were a Communist in Russia, and invented a weapon for the defense of the Communist state, there is no guarantee that his invention could not be "taken over" by Fascists, and used against this same state. Hegel forged philosophic weapons that Marx "took over" for revolutionary purposes. A contraption's possible uses in new contexts are unpredictable—and European thought is the history of schools who proved themselves "ready to take over" the implements of opposing or divergent schools. On this point, Farrell has so much evidence in his favor, that I am surprised how niggardly he was in making use of it.

Instead, he devotes his time to attacking Left critics who have been attempting to discover how effectively the literary weapons may be "taken over" for the emphases of *here and now*. These men think (1) that radical social change is necessary, (2) that political awareness is a valuable weapon in shaping "consciousness" in behalf of change, and (3) that imaginative art and critical comment, taken together, shape this consciousness by both emotional and conceptual prodings. Surely they are not blunt enough to overlook the fact that art and politics are not a perfect fit. As one just observer remarked to me, Farrell might have clinched the issue by citing the authority of the Oxford dictionary, where the mere definitions of "art" and "politics" disclose the discrepancies between the two. But for purposes of social change, to be brought about with the aid of political thinking, these leftward-looking critics attempt to discover how close the correspondence between art and politics can be. Aware that the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century put forth an enormous amount of propaganda art in preparation

for the French Revolution, they ask themselves how much of this same procedure can be "taken over" for the enforcing of new social emphases. Tactically, the issue resolves itself in irony: the critics speculate as to how close the fit between art and politics can be, and Farrell pops up brightly with the "refutation" that art and politics are not a perfect fit.

If you feel vengeful toward some of the men discussed, you may rejoice that young Lonigan sometimes catches them when their gang is not around and gives them a trimming. If you feel that their efforts are desirable, you may regret that Farrell makes no positive contribution to the issue. The book's deficiencies, as a new contribution to literary criticism, might arise from the indirectness of the approach. The philosophic vocabulary employed is too unwieldy, too roundabout. The direct coordinates proper to literary criticism are those of rhetoric. Rhetoric deals with literary processes, with the response to literary processes and, by extension, with the non-literary factors (economic, biological, psychological) that underlie our response to symbols. Above all, it requires one to discuss the destiny of the artist's medium, as it lives in artist and audience. Though Farrell's instruments are keen enough, their keenness is for other purposes; he is dealing with the problems of rhetoric without choosing instruments precisely adjusted to the needs of his subject.

The failure to consider explicitly the destiny of the artistic medium, for instance, leads him to damn as "subjective" a statement that the poet "gives names and values" to life. The charge is unfortunate on two grounds. First, it is confusing: Farrell had already defined the esthetic as "subjective," in contrast with the "objective" or "use-value" that we get in simple propaganda—and though he had consistently spoken in behalf of this subjective element, we now find subjectivity interpreted as a fault. He is presumably using a word in two senses, a weakness that he never forgives in his opponents. Second, an explicit consideration of language would have made him more precise. For language *does* give names and values to life; yet it is not "subjective" because, as a public or collective product shaped by people working with practical necessities, it must take objective realities into account. Its "myths" are thus grounded in objective references, and the poet's work assumes similar objectivity in that it is shaped by this public *communicative* equipment. Language "gives" names and values in the sense that, if we were not taught to speak, we could not develop the full complexities of "consciousness." The concept of class struggle, for instance, gives not only new names but also new values to life in that its perspective shapes our understanding of historic processes. If someone asks, "How about the 'myth' of the Nazis?" I answer: "It too gives values, but wrong ones—and the objective, communicative, coöperative tests will prove their wrongness."

Farrell rightly attacks naïve Marxists who would rail against "abstraction" as the devilish invention of the bourgeoisie. "Das Kapital" is nothing if not a masterpiece of abstract thought. But one may wish that Farrell's abstractions had been framed with closer reference to his own concrete procedures as a writer. One often senses behind his book a defense of his own methods (as in his able comments on "decay" books and "success" books), but it is a loss to criticism when so able a technician fails to give us the explicit technical discussion of literary appeal he was equipped to provide. In the end you are left merely with the feeling that some critics, in their necessary work of simplification, have sometimes oversimplified—and you are a dumbbell if you needed a special book to tell you that.

KENNETH BURKE.

A Check List of Summer Books

BIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS

- LORD PALMERSTON, by H. C. F. Bell (Longmans, Green, 2 vols., \$12.50). A scholar's life of the man who almost maneuvered England into fighting for the Confederacy.
- FROM A SURGEON'S JOURNAL, by Harvey Cushing (Little, Brown, \$5). War as a great surgeon saw it from day to day.
- THOMAS DE QUINCEY, by Horace Ainsworth Eaton (Oxford, \$5). A full-length "definitive" biography of the English opium-eater.
- HITLER, by Konrad Heiden (Knopf, \$3). A readable and sound biography of the German leader, excelling in its characterizations and its account of the Nazi party.
- INTIMATE LETTERS OF JAMES GIBBONS HUNEKER, edited by Josephine Huneke (Liveright, \$2). His private opinions on men, women, himself and the seven arts. (Early August.)
- CHARLES JAMES FOX, by Edward Lascelles (Oxford, \$3.75). A full-dress biography of the eighteenth-century liberal. (Late July.)
- FRIEDRICH ENGELS, by Gustav Meyer (Knopf, \$3.50). The first biography in English of Marx's collaborator and closest friend.
- HITLER, by Rudolf Olden (Covici, Friede, \$3). Another readable and well documented biography of Hitler, with perhaps more emphasis on political analysis than Heiden's book.
- GREEN LAURELS, by Donald Culross Peattie (Simon and Schuster, \$3.75). The lives of the great naturalists; by the author of "An Almanac for Moderns." (Early July.)
- SATAN CAME TO EDEN, by Dore Strauch (Harpers, \$3). The story of a strange, brave, foolish pair who left Germany for Galapagos.
- GEORGE BERKELEY: His Life and Philosophy, by John D. Wild (Harvard, \$6). A philosopher's study of the great Bishop of Cloyne.

FICTION

- THE BIG MONEY, by John Dos Passos (Harcourt, Brace, \$2.75). The final volume of the trilogy that began with "The 42nd Parallel" and "1919." (Early August.)
- FOLLOWERS OF THE SUN, by Harvey Fergusson (Knopf, \$2.50). Pioneering in the West; a long novel by the author of "Rio Grande." (Early July.)
- EYELESS IN GAZA, by Aldous Huxley (Harpers, \$2.50). Huxley's new reaction to the dangers that threaten European civilization. (Early July.)
- WATERLOO, by Manuel Komroff (Coward-McCann, \$2.50). The panorama of the hundred days between Elba and St. Helena. (Late June.)
- THE WEATHER IN THE STREETS, by Rosamond Lehmann (Reynal and Hitchcock, \$2.50). The birth and slow death of a love affair.
- DAYS OF WRATH, by André Malraux (Random House, \$1.75). The story of a German Communist in prison: a short novel as simple and sometimes as moving as a Greek tragedy.
- STORIES OF THREE DECADES, by Thomas Mann (Knopf, \$3). Reviewed in this issue.
- GONE WITH THE WIND, by Margaret Mitchell (Macmillan, \$3). War and reconstruction in the red hills of northwest Georgia.
- THE EARTH TREMBLES, by Jules Romains (Knopf, \$3). The fifth volume of "Men of Good Will," in which Romains treats the struggles of the working class. (Early July.)
- A FUGITIVE CROSSES HIS TRACKS, by Aksel Sandemose (Knopf, \$2.50). Gradually, in broken memories, a murderer explains his boyhood and his crime.
- SANFELICE, by Vincent Sheean (Doubleday, Doran, \$2.50). Lord Nelson against the revolution in Naples; the rise and bloody fall of the Parthenopean Republic.
- GUNNAR'S DAUGHTER, by Sigrid Undset (Knopf, \$2). Another story of life in the Middle Ages by Sweden's greatest novelist. (Late July.)
- SALAR THE SALMON, by Henry Williamson (Little, Brown, \$2.50). The story of a salmon's adventurous return to the spawning grounds; nature writing of a high order.

DRAMA, VERSE, CRITICISM

- BURNING CITY, by Stephen Vincent Benét (Farrar and Rinehart, \$2.50). A collection of new poems including a fine "Litany for Dictators" and three effective "Nightmares."
- THE FLOWERING OF NEW ENGLAND: 1815-1865, by Van Wyck Brooks (Dutton, \$4). The first volume, complete in itself, of a general history of American literature. (Early August.)
- POEMS: 1919-1934, by Walter de la Mare (Holt, \$2.50). All the verse that de la Mare has written since the 1918 volume of "Collected Poems."
- ABINGER HARVEST, by E. M. Forster (Harcourt, Brace, \$3.50). Literary essays and character sketches by the wisest and gentlest of English critics.
- SELECTED POEMS, by Vachel Lindsay (Macmillan, \$1.50). A collection of Lindsay's more representative poems. (Early July.)
- BURY THE DEAD, by Irwin Shaw (Random House, \$1). A convincing statement in terms of drama of the case against war.
- LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES, by Lionel Wigram (Viking, \$1.75). A first book of elegiac nature poems, smooth and graceful.

GENERAL

- WHO OWNS AMERICA? edited by Herbert Agar and Allen Tate (Houghton Mifflin, \$3). An agrarian symposium.
- THE DISCUSSION OF HUMAN AFFAIRS, by Charles A. Beard (Macmillan, \$1.75). A sharp-humored discussion of the degree to which past history can help us in judging current history.
- PROGRESS AND POWER, by Carl L. Becker (Stanford, \$1.50). A historian meditates on the problem of whether we can still believe in the progress of mankind.
- THE CONQUEST OF YUCATAN, by Frans Blom (Houghton Mifflin, \$3.50). The story of the conquistadores in Yucatan, by an authority on the Mayas.
- LISTEN FOR A LONESOME DRUM, by Carl Carmer (Farrar and Rinehart, \$3). Stars also fell on upstate New York, Mr. Carmer's own country. (Late June.)
- A PLACE IN THE SUN, by Grover Clark (Macmillan, \$2.50). The author asks whether imperialism pays, and proves that it doesn't.
- NOR FROM HEAVEN, by Morris Ernst (Simon and Schuster, \$2.50). The Constitution was not written and has not been interpreted by angels or supermen. (Early June.)
- A PROGRAM FOR AMERICA, by Harry S. Laidler (Crowell, \$2.50). A discussion of the more important social and economic problems in this country, and the solution through socialism.
- OSCAR WILDE DISCOVERS AMERICA, by Lloyd Lewis and Henry Justin Smith (Harcourt, Brace, \$4.50). A great deal of material to show that Oscar Wilde was not half so funny as the America he invaded in knee pants.
- SOUTHERN REGIONS OF THE UNITED STATES, by Howard W. Odum (North Carolina, \$4). All the obtainable facts about the Southeastern section of this country; an objective and exhaustive study prepared for the Social Science Research Council.
- EUROPE UNDER THE TERROR, by John L. Spivak (Simon and Schuster, \$2.50). The inquiring reporter talks to the fascists and their victims.
- UNDER THE AXE OF FASCISM, by Gaetano Salvemini (Viking, \$3). A study of modern Italy. Its thesis: that industrialists and large landowners used fascism to break labor.
- ON THE RIM OF THE ABYSS, by James T. Shotwell (Macmillan, \$3). An argument against isolation.
- THE STORY OF SCOTLAND YARD, by Sir Basil Thomson (Doubleday, Doran, \$2.65). By the former head of Scotland Yard.
- WHOSE CONSTITUTION? by Henry A. Wallace (Reynal and Hitchcock, \$1.75). The Secretary of Agriculture studies whether the Constitution of 1787 will fit the problems of 1936.
- THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION, by Edward Westermarck (Macmillan, \$2.50). The author of the standard "History of Human Marriage" surveys marriage customs in the world today. (Early August.)
- TRAVELS IN TWO DEMOCRACIES, by Edmund Wilson (Harcourt, Brace, \$2.50). The artist as reporter—his journal of impressions gathered in the United States and the Soviet Union.

The Last Great European

THE LINE that divides Symbolist or "art" novels from social novels is probably not so straight or definite as people seemed to think a few years ago, when the subject was being vehemently argued. It is a border without guards or customs officials, and doubtful travelers are privileged to stand with one foot in either country. They can even become leading citizens of both, as witness the example of Thomas Mann, who is probably more respected than any other living writer. During the last twenty-five years, Mann has gradually become a social novelist, in an admirable sense of the word, yet he has not abandoned the technique or the emotional color of the Symbolists. He has never made the gesture of violently deserting an ivory tower.

His career can be traced in "Stories of Three Decades,"¹ an omnibus volume containing everything he has written for publication except his essays and his four big novels. The book includes two long stories, "Death in Venice" and "Tonio Kröger," which Mann says in his introduction that he is inclined to reckon "not with my slighter but with my more important works." It includes two other long stories which, with much hesitation, I should be willing to place above Mann's favorites: these two are "Tristan" and "Mario and the Magician." "Blood of the Walsungs," describing a family of rich, hateful, pitiable Jews, is a shorter story almost as good; so too is "Disorder and Early Sorrow," in which all the hysteria of the German inflation is distilled into the tears of a six-year-old girl. There are stories still shorter than these last; there are episodes, sketches and a long, beautifully accurate biography of Mann's dog, recommended as corrective reading to people who believe that dog stories are childish. There is the first chapter of a novel, "Felix Krull," that Mann never continued; and there is "Fiorenze," a historico-philosophical drama that had some success on the stage, but not enough to make its author a professional playwright. In all there are twenty-four pieces, written at every stage of his life—from the year 1896, when he was twenty-one, to the year 1929, when he won the Nobel Prize. In their chronological order they give a fairly clear picture of his development.

His early work was centered round the familiar Symbolist theme of the artist's solitude. "There are two worlds," Mann always seemed to be saying. "There is the world of happy, normal people, to be envied even for their stupidity, and there is the lonely world in which the artist tries to bridle his nightmares, but often lets them run away with him." Almost all his stories dealt either with artists or else with moral or physical cripples (and he tended to place all these people in the same category, little Herr Friedemann the hunchback, Detlev Spinell the dilettante and Felix Krull the swindler).

His nearest approach to a hero is Tonio Kröger, the young, successful, hard-working novelist; yet this autobiographical character is the one who says most forcibly that art is a product of decay and that artists by their calling are barred out of ordinary society. "Literature is not a calling, it's a curse," Tonio tells his good friend Lisabeta Ivanovna. "It begins by your feeling yourself set apart, in a curious sort of opposition to the nice, regular people; there is a gulf of ironic sensibility, of knowledge, skepticism, disagreement, between you and the others; it grows deeper and deeper, you realize that you are alone." Both the artists and their audience are "always and only

the poor and suffering, never any of the others, the blue-eyed ones. . . . The kingdom of art increases and that of health and innocence declines on this earth." It is curious to find that Tonio does not feel in the least angry or contemptuous toward the world that half rejects him; in this respect he is unlike Joyce's Stephen Dedalus and Huysmans' des Esseintes and almost all the other Symbolist heroes. He really loves and envies the ordinary people, "the blue-eyed ones" who have no need of art. His good friend tells him, "You are really a bourgeois on the wrong path, a bourgeois *manqué*."

"Tonio Kröger" is an unusual story, warm and open-hearted in mood, skillful in craftsmanship, the first work in which Mann learned to interweave his themes like a composer writing a symphony. Yet with the passage of years it is losing part of its effectiveness: the ideas behind it are beginning to seem provincial, localized in time and space. In writing it Mann did not foresee that the conflict between artist and bourgeois would not be an eternal subject, nor that it would soon become impossible to use the upper middle class as a symbol of health. He would soon be forced to go into his material more deeply.

That is exactly what he did in writing "Death in Venice," which was finished eight years later. Ostensibly it is another story of the relation between life and art, between art and self-discipline. Gustave von Aschenbach, the hero, is a distinguished novelist who has sustained himself through fifty years by obeying his Prussian sense of duty. Then, in the late afternoon of his life, he yields to the dissipation that is, for Mann, both a symbol of art and a symbol of death. He finds that Venice is a plague-stricken city, but he has fallen in love with a beautiful Polish boy and refuses to go northward until it is too late for him to escape. The story is extraordinary for its musical structure and for the complicated suggestions it evokes. But among these suggestions is one of a social and political nature. "Death in Venice" was published just two years before the War, and Mann is inclined to believe that its popularity was due to its "intense timeliness"—the delirium in which Aschenbach foundered belonged to the mood of the day, and was a prophecy of the general delirium in which Europe would shortly founder. Aschenbach was not merely a picture of the artist yielding to his vices: he came to represent a moment of the European mind.

I am trying to describe the process by which a Symbolist novelist developed into a social novelist without greatly changing his aims or his methods, but chiefly by broadening his human sympathies. In another story—it is the last in the volume and appeared in 1929—the point becomes much clearer. "Mario and the Magician" relates the misadventures of a German family at a little Italian watering place. They do not like Torre di Venere; the chip-on-the-shoulder nationalism of the Italian tourists makes their lives mildly but persistently disagreeable. Nevertheless they remain, by inertia, and get themselves involved in the dangerous affair of the Cavaliere Cipolla. This magician, as he advertises himself—this hypnotist, as he is in reality—proves to be crippled and hateful and compelling. At his one performance he overawes and insults the audience, forcing one man after another to obey him, and the audience likes it; even the German children laugh and clap without quite knowing what is taking place. But Cipolla goes too far, and one of his victims shoots him down, thus clearing the air of hysteria and constraint.

"Mario and the Magician" is not on the face of it a political story, in spite of occasional references to Mussolini and Italian pride. It deals with one episode witnessed by an ordinary German family. Yet it conveys, more strongly

¹ Stories of Three Decades, by Thomas Mann. Translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.

than anything else I have read, the atmosphere of Europe in these days of dictatorship and mass insanity: it suggests in miniature the great meetings at the Sport Palace in Berlin where Hitler sways the crowd like wind-bowed aspens: it gives us the essence of the Blood Purge, the Saar Plebiscite, the Ethiopian war—everything is there, if only in the germ, and it was there six years before most of it was printed in the morning papers. We should not demand that poets must be prophets; this is not part of their trade. But sometimes it happens that a writer, by going into his subject deeply, finds in it the spiritual tendencies that grew out of yesterday's events and will become the political tendencies of tomorrow. Thomas Mann, like Tolstoy, has done this more than once, and not for his own country alone. In this age of crazy nationalisms, he is almost the last great European.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

Robert Frost's New Poems

A Further Range, by Robert Frost. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 102 pages. \$2.50.

FOR THE past five or six years, Mr. Frost's critics have done him a curious disservice. They have insisted, both by implication and emphatic reassertion, that his poetry is the work of a major poet; they have assured us that Mr. Frost must take an embarrassed stand as the inheritor of a New England tradition which at its best includes the names of Emerson, Whittier and the recently rediscovered metaphysical poet, Jones Very. I doubt if Mr. Frost pretends to any such eminence, for to do so would place his work at singular disadvantage. If he were to step at any point crossing the paths of Emerson and Whittier he would be forced to carry an unwelcome load of social responsibility—and even, God save him!—give up forever "My own strategic retreat" and an obscure desire for a "one-man revolution."

No, Mr. Frost is not the kind of poet, major or otherwise, that his critics have imagined him to be. I prefer to think of him in another set of associations where his virtues are more positive and his gains more genuine. I think of him as the last survivor of the "Georgian movement" which ran its course in England from 1911 to 1921. Of the poetry published during the first years of that period "A Boy's Will" was easily the best; it was Robert Frost, the American, who was to compress into one short line the philosophy of the entire movement: "Turn the poet out of door." His great advantage over his English contemporaries (such poets as Edward Thomas, Wilfred Gibson and W. H. Davies) was a quick ear for the use of the common words in everyday speech that are the property of uncommon poetry; and he has never lost his skill in using them, retaining even in his present book the familiar tang of Yankee vernacular.

Perhaps the title of his new book, "A Further Range," is half ironic; if not, I believe that he has heard too clearly the siren call of his unwise critics. It has always been Mr. Frost's particular virtue to make molehills out of mountains, to dig sharply, clearly and not too deeply into New England soil; so far as he has done this well, his integrity remains unquestioned. Beyond this range, however, he becomes self-defensive and ill informed; I refer to "Build Soil—A Political Pastoral," "To a Thinker," "A Lone Striker" and those thinly disguised platitudes in "Ten Mills"—all included in the present volume. If Mr. Frost sincerely wishes to identify himself with "A Drumlin Wood-

chuck" (one of the better poems in the book), to be "more secure and snug," why does he trouble his head about further ranges into politics, where his wisdom may be compared to that of Calvin Coolidge?

There are two poems in this collection of fifty-one that are memorable examples of Mr. Frost's happiest insights and abilities: they are "The Master Speed" and "Provide Provide."

HORACE GREGORY.

Offensive on Two Fronts

Belomor: The Building of the Great Baltic-White Sea Canal by Russia's "Reforged" Prisoners, by Maxim Gorky and other Soviet authors. New York: Harrison Smith and Robert Haas. 344 pages. \$3.

IT TOOK Tsarist Russia some two hundred years to "consider" building a canal by means of which ships could get from the White Sea to the Baltic without going all the way round by the Arctic Ocean, down the coast of Norway and through the Skagerak and the Kattegat. It took the U.S.S.R. twenty months to dig the canal that Holy Russia had spent two centuries in considering. The records, which are now available in English, read like the raw material for a great epic poem.

"Belomor," the collective work of thirty-four Soviet writers, tells of the building of the Baltic-White Sea Canal by 10,000 prisoners of the O.G.P.U., under the leadership of a handful—thirty-seven, to be exact—of chekists. Among these prisoners were murderers, thieves, forgers and swindlers, not to mention those more genteel "anti-social" elements such as kulaks and wreckers. The narrative is carried forward on two fronts. The first records the offensive against nature, the successful carrying through of a tremendous engineering campaign against obstacles of rock and swamp and wilderness and bitterly hostile climate. The second, even more thrilling, records the reforging of thousands of men and women through purposeful labor.

One of the most significant aspects of the present volume is the light it throws on the cases of those engineers accused by the Soviet government of "wrecking" and "sabotage." Enemies have charged that such engineers were "framed" to cover up the blunders of Soviet bureaucrats. "Impartial" observers have suggested that perhaps the O.G.P.U. had its own sinister devices for impounding the services of engineers for particular tasks. Yet, as Amabel Williams-Ellis says in her introduction to the English edition, "Belomor" shows very clearly how the whole method of sabotage was possible—even perhaps inevitable:

We see men who felt quite sure that the Soviet regime was not going to last, that the old times would come back and the capitalists reappear. They drew a perfectly comprehensible conclusion from this premise. It was this: when the capitalists come back, then it will be the faithful steward, who has everything connected with the estate at his fingers' ends, who will be the favored one.

That instead of finding themselves in on the ground floor, certain engineers found themselves in penal colonies, is a matter of history. That these same engineers were able to regain their position in society in common with humbler individuals whose offenses against the socialist state were considerably less serious, is not the least achievement of the Soviet government.

EDWIN SEAVER.

Bright Lexicon of Success

Noah Webster: *Schoolmaster to America*, by Harry R. Warfel. New York: The Macmillan Company. 473 pages. \$3.50.

STUDENTS of education, of the English language in America and of our cultural history, will find much meat in the rich and detailed pages of Professor Warfel's new life of Noah Webster. Above all, anyone who wants to understand the role of propaganda, of the scholar and of the promoter in American life, will do well to turn to this erudite biography of one of the most influential Americans of his own and succeeding generations.

In spite of the universal recognition of the importance of nationalism in the contemporary world, students have inadequately explored the origins and development of that phenomenon in the United States. It has, to be sure, been common knowledge that Noah Webster, publicist, educator, author of dictionaries and textbooks, was an important figure in the promotion of nationalism during the early days of the republic. But Professor Warfel makes it clear that the author of the famous "blue-back speller" was an even more significant force than we have supposed.

With richness of detail Professor Warfel reveals the remarkable career of the man whom he calls, with much justification, "schoolmaster to America" in the years between 1783 and 1843. Fired with patriotic fervor during the trying times of the Revolution, young Webster left Yale to take part in the struggle for independence. From that time until his death, whether he was teaching school, practicing law, editing the first really national periodical in America, making dictionaries or lecturing, Noah Webster promoted American nationalism along with American scholarship and his own fortunes. We see him, an impoverished, ambitious, vain young man, traveling up and down the land, establishing contacts with important personages, writing and working in and out of season for a strong, central government, for "preparedness" and for neutrality in foreign conflicts and, above all, for a distinctively American language, a characteristically American system of education and government, a uniquely American culture. His interesting history of epidemic diseases, his numerous grammars, dictionaries and spelling books, as well as his tracts, were all charged with this zeal for an American civilization—for throwing off the shackles of European fashions and influences. This pontifical Yankee, browbeating at times in his tactics, conceited yet benevolent, did more, probably, than any other contemporary to achieve that goal.

It was not as a founder of Amherst College but as the compiler of dictionaries and texts that Noah Webster put his stamp on American education, and especially on American orthography, grammar and speech. He stood for vocational training, for utilitarianism in education and for the indoctrination of orthodox Christianity, patriotism and obedience to the existing order. His "American Dictionary of the English Language," the first monumental example of American scholarship, belonged to, and yet transcended, the time and the place.

Although Professor Warfel is aware of Webster's shift from faith in the perfectibility of mankind, the plasticity of institutions, the social compact and the natural-rights-of-man philosophy, to the Federalist doctrines of a stake-in-society economics and politics, and to orthodox religion, he does not adequately explain the reasons for this conversion, nor its relation to American nationalism. It is clear, as the author suggests, that Webster's abandonment of his

revolutionary faith was partly connected with his desire for personal success: he realized that those best able to help him in his numerous pursuits were men of wealth and position. But Professor Warfel fails to relate this conversion to the shifting class tensions and interests of American society. Yet no one can read the vivid story of Webster's fight for a copyright law, of his bickerings and quarrels with competitors, without realizing that the work of this great lexicographer and distinguished scholar did not function in a vacuum: or without seeing plainly that the ideas for which Noah Webster labored and made appreciable sacrifices were functional to the needs of business enterprise, the rights of private property and the maintenance of existing class and political arrangements.

MERLE CURTI.

The Great Opposer

Borah of Idaho, by Claudius O. Johnson. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 512 pages. \$3.

THIS IS no campaign biography, but a solid, scholarly work, perhaps too solid and scholarly for the non-specialist. Whenever he is not quoting from, or summarizing, documents, Mr. Johnson writes with charm and wit, but such passages are rare. Perhaps the most interesting of his revelations concerns the final defeat of the League Covenant in the Senate. It has long been known that Senator Lodge, the Republican leader, originally was prepared to accept the Covenant with Republican reservations. Likewise it has been known that toward the end of January, 1920, Lodge suddenly and unaccountably reversed his position. Mr. Johnson says that, during the negotiations between Lodge and the Senate Democratic leaders, Borah received an anonymous telephone call, informing him that Lodge and the Democrats had come to an understanding. Hastily Borah summoned a meeting of the Irreconcilables, and sent Senator Moses to bring Lodge before them. Greatly ruffled, Lodge appeared, challenging their right to spy on his actions. Borah angrily replied that he proposed to denounce Lodge on the floor of the Senate, and drive him from the party leadership. "Senator Lodge, considerably agitated, trembled from head to foot," Mr. Johnson writes. Friends restored calm, and presently Lodge returned to inform the waiting Democrats that the agreement was off.

Mr. Johnson hesitantly tries to explain the contradictions of Borah's personality. The chief influence in Borah's life, he says, has been his father, a dour Presbyterian farmer of Illinois. Despite his own strait-laced morality, the old gentleman repeatedly shocked neighborhood opinion by defending church brothers and sisters who had been detected in sin, and singlehandedly prevented the school board from firing young Will's favorite teacher, a man addicted to drink. He knew the Bible almost by heart—as his son knows the Constitution and *The Federalist*—and was always ready to contradict the local minister. On one occasion, he and his neighbor, County Judge Bryan, the father of William Jennings Bryan, held an impromptu, day-long debate on Scriptural interpretation, preventing a scheduled session of the court. It is an interesting confirmation of Mr. Johnson's theory that when Senator Borah, aged seventy and a presidential candidate, recently visited his birthplace, he informed the shouting mob of Republicans who had come to meet him: "I promised my father not to make a partisan speech in Wayne County." And he didn't.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

More Personal History

Sanfelice, by Vincent Sheean. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. \$2.50.

IN MR. Sheean's career as a foreign correspondent he has been an eyewitness of obviously historic events. His experiences in Morocco, in Soviet Russia and in revolutionary China gave him not only plenty to cable home about but food for thought outside of office hours. As he related in his "Personal History," his faith in capitalist civilization was severely shaken, and at times he was almost persuaded to become a Communist. But not entirely. His autobiography ended on a popularly inconclusive note. Mr. Sheean gave up reporting colorful news-history for New York newspapers, however, and went to Italy, presumably to think things over.

"Sanfelice" is really more interesting for what it tells us about Mr. Sheean and his ideas than for itself. As a story "Sanfelice" is pretty dull in spots. It is a historical novel about the abortive revolution in Naples in 1799, and those who have not read such livelier accounts of the period as Marjorie Bowen's "Patriotic Lady" (published a few months ago) may forgive Mr. Sheean's romantic gloss for the sake of his facts. As a novel, "Sanfelice" is second-rate, its characters wooden marionettes or jerky caricatures; but luckily Mr. Sheean has not had to depend on his invention for either the outlines or the background of his story.

In 1799 Naples was still a Bourbon stronghold. Napoleon's Italian campaign had not reached to the south of Italy, and he had gone off on a wild-goose venture to Egypt, where his fleet was destroyed at the Battle of the Nile by Nelson, and he and his army apparently bottled up for good. The Court of Naples, warmly abetted by the English Minister, Sir William Hamilton, and his famously beautiful wife, Emma, fêted "the hero of the Nile" with hysterical adulation. The celebrations over, Naples foolishly sent an army against the small French contingent left in Rome; in the subsequent campaign the outnumbered French veterans were completely victorious, and the march on Rome degenerated into a headlong flight. The Court and the Hamiltons were transported by Nelson to the safety of Sicily, and for a few months the Parthenopean Republic came into being. Nothing really supported the Republic except French bayonets: the Neapolitan liberals were almost without exception members of the upper classes. The common people were for the Bourbons to the last ragged urchin. As soon as the French support was withdrawn the Parthenopean Republic fell apart like a stage set; Nelson and the Bourbons came back, and their vengeance was bloody.

Such a story would be enough for most people, but not for Mr. Sheean. Because he is a romantic, and because he could not find a true hero among the dramatis personae of that bloody tragicomedy, he had to invent one. He has made her a woman, Luisa Sanfelice, an impoverished aristocrat who by chance and without ever understanding or consenting to her role, becomes the helpless symbol of the revolution and pays the penalty with her life.

Mr. Sheean's sympathy with the Parthenopeans is as apparent as his scorn for the Bourbons and their adherents; and he makes one of his characters say, after the fall of the Republic, words to this effect: "Cheer up! This revolution may have been a flop, but The Revolution is on its way. Time—marches on!" It may be reading too much into "Sanfelice" to say that it indicates Mr. Sheean's continued unwillingness to decide what he thinks about the world he lives in—for other men, too, have gone abroad

in time and space to get a clearer view of their native land. But I think the book shows Mr. Sheean's strong desire to romanticize the evidence; and I do not think I am romanticizing the evidence of "Sanfelice" in saying that its author is still struggling with that last infirmity of un-made-up minds: Mr. Sheean is a liberal. T. S. MATTHEWS.

The Holy British Empire

A History of Europe, by H. A. L. Fisher. Vol. I, *Ancient and Medieval*; Vol. II, *Renaissance, Reformation, Reason*; Vol. III, *The Liberal Experiment*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1,302 pages. \$12.

HISTORY teaches, we are told, that history does not teach anything. That is not so. It seems that all history, but particularly the history of Europe, teaches that the British ruling classes have a corner on political wisdom, that international morality is "made in England," and that England alone can boast of a national and imperial development which makes good, hard sense. The Warden of New College, Oxford, is too learned and too sophisticated to try to prove or propagandize such propositions, or even to state them. He merely assumes them with that bland air of self-assurance and unconscious superiority for which the world cannot sufficiently admire the upper-class Englishman.

In the first volume, Mr. Fisher piously discharges the British debt to the classical world by exalting the Greeks and the Romans and neglecting the immense contribution of the Egyptians and Babylonians to the civilization of Europe. He mobilizes Roman history for the double duty of justifying the British Empire and indicating, by contrast, the defter imperial touch of the modern Romans. Both empires are diagnosed as being the result of an advanced stage of political somnambulism. Rome was drawn into empire "half reluctantly and of no set plan," Mr. Fisher concludes. "The successive stages of her conquest of Italy were forced upon her because, as England afterwards experienced in India, an orderly power ringed round by turbulence always finds itself compelled to establish peace and security upon its frontiers."

Medieval and modern history serve to illustrate the contrast between the serious shortcomings of the Continent and the excellence of England. Mr. Fisher regards the French as a military and romantic nation, but frequently cowardly and vindictive in hours of crisis. They thirst for "glory and romance" and constantly get bored with their monarchs. Mr. Fisher's Germans are methodical and intelligent but sentimental and submissive. His Russians are, of course, "semi-oriental" although they can trace their state organization to the extravagantly "Nordic" Varangians. He regrets that, "in so many Russians, a spirit of resignation" takes the place of "a capacity for sustained and energetic thought." The Spaniards are quite beyond hope, for "the parching sun, the dry, bitter, dust-laden winds seem so to work that afflictions of the soul, such as communism and socialism, clericalism and syndicalism, develop in the Spanish climate in their most violent forms."

While he condemns again and again the narrowness of racialism and of nationalism, Mr. Fisher is willing to allow the reader to discover for himself, as it were, how much grander are the British, how much sounder England's achievements, how much more natural and engaging and pardonable her infirmities and failures. "Eccentric, incoherent, apparently stupid," the British are undeservedly unpopular abroad, for "their superficial defects of manner and bearing are far too obvious to the foreigner." They love

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money but they also love peace. These Anglo-Saxons early demonstrated "their passion for the improvement of mankind through religion and knowledge," and the grateful Fates cast them for the role of the leading people in the world. In a transport of enthusiasm, Mr. Fisher exclaims that "ever since 'the glorious revolution' England has been the most wisely governed of the European states"—forgetting the black pages of the Industrial Revolution, the forcible enclosure of common fields, the "deserted villages" and the reluctance to introduce democracy and social reform in the nineteenth century. Mr. Fisher comes out boldly against the social evils of early industrialism, but explains that they must be blamed on the panic induced by the French wars, which were caused, in the first instance, by French "banditry" in the Austrian Netherlands. With what amounts to positive genius for moral confusion, he contrives to wring spiritual satisfactions from iniquity itself. His sense of shame and humiliation at the circumstance that "of all European slave traders the British were the most successful and the most guilty" cannot deter him from repeating proudly the judgment of Lecky that the anti-slavery crusade in England "may probably be regarded as among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages in the history of nations." Even war yields dividends in morality to the British—the Crimean War gave them Florence Nightingale, and the Boer War, boy scouting.

Mr. Fisher is very indignant over the unethical violation of Belgian treaties by France and Germany but cannot bring himself to regard England's breach of the Treaty of Amiens with Napoleon as anything worse than "technically incorrect." He has a special criterion for judging the acts of his own country, for "it may . . . be claimed for British foreign policy that a vein of humanitarian sentiment, sometimes quixotic, sometimes capricious, but always genuine, and deriving through Wesley and Wilberforce from the Puritan tradition of the seventeenth century, mingles with the coarser stuff of economic or political calculation." It may perhaps be something of a strain to fit Walpole and Pitt, Palmerston and Hoare, into a Puritan hagiology, but then they ruled in England and "no other country in Europe so swiftly or lightly conceives a passion for the oppressed in other lands." In other lands. Mr. Fisher's deceptively long list of the gushing attachments of a wayward empire unfortunately does not include the late Tasmanians, who were completely exterminated and whose last survivor was laid to rest by the British in 1876. We also miss the Indians. We miss the Irish, a nation the British rulers have assassinated, starved and scattered to the four winds. It seems that the real trouble with the Irish is that they have been only "half-conquered" so many times! This brazenness reaches the extreme in the analogy that compares the British rulers with Abraham Lincoln, and the Irish rebels with the secessionist slave-holding lords of the American South.

There is method in all this. The strains of empire, aristocracy and moral rationalization blend into a philosophy of history. Benighted mankind always craves for "authority and direction in the conduct of life." Man's rational aspiration for order and harmony is constantly frustrated by his own perversity. In short, "the trend of the human spirit" is "in the direction of despotism." "The wheels of history are seldom moved by the poor. In the main the world is ruled by station, wealth and intellect." High birth and culture go together. With these sweeping strokes, Mr. Fisher, historian and statesman, rounds out a revealing spiritual autobiography of the British imperialist in the form of a three-volume essay bearing the curious title "A History of Europe."

SOLOMON F. BLOOM.

Writers in Politics: A Conversation with Malraux

André Malraux, along with Gide, Rolland, Aragon and other writers, played an important part in the formation and recent victory of the French People's Front. Before the elections he was interviewed for The New Republic by Henri Lefebvre, a journalist and teacher who has also been active in the political struggles.—THE EDITORS.

Question. You attended the Communist Party Congress. The hero of "Days of Wrath"—and he is a hero in the exact sense of the word—is also a politician. Have you adopted the thesis that a writer should enter the field of politics and think politically?

Answer. A writer can defend the values that are definitely those of the Communist Party. But I do not think that he should identify his activities with those of the Party, or specifically that he should follow the Party in its tactics and maneuvers (which are perhaps necessary in the political arena). He has everything to lose by this identification.

Q. Have you a definite case in mind?

A. I should judge that Romain Rolland is weakening his own authority by discussing the Franco-Russian pact from the standpoint of a Communist politician. I claim only one right as regards the defense of the U.S.S.R.—that of enlisting in the Soviet foreign legion in case of war and thus giving my testimony. The writer is a man who enlists personally, who testifies. In the same way, I regard Trotsky as a moment in the past and not as a political adversary to be pursued and crushed.

Q. Questions like these are preoccupying the intellectuals and young people. They are asking themselves how they should live. The political line does not answer this question.

A. I do not think that it can be answered in the abstract. An ethic grows out of personal activities. When a man tells us, "I love the people," we laugh and we are right to laugh. But after Lenin's death, Krupskaya said, "Lenin loved the people." These words had an entirely different meaning because there had been the life of Lenin. Ethical problems change their meaning according to what has gone before them. Thus, Louis Aragon, in reviewing "Days of Wrath," could say that the book existed only because of Dimitrov. Happiness is something different when it comes after a revolutionary war and the building of socialism.

Q. Perhaps one of the reasons for the victory of Hitler's fascism is that it supplied an ethic that could be directly applied: heroic pessimism. Should we not oppose the fascists with another ethic, an optimism?

A. The attitude of the Nazi youth cannot be fought in the name of optimism. On that ground we are weak. Outside of the U.S.S.R., and for ourselves, we are perhaps fated to be pessimistic, and only heroism can inspire us or give our lives a meaning. But we can show that Dr. Schacht and the idealist hoax are lurking behind the heroic pessimism of the Nazi youth. Part of their ethic is renunciation. We ourselves do not renounce.

But we should not quarrel with their sense of virile fraternity. This exists among the Young Communists just as it does among the Storm Troopers. What we can say and prove is that, in order to share in the virile fraternity of the Storm Troopers, a German peasant must be torn from his roots in the earth, whereas a Russian peasant can remain true to himself when he enters the Red Army; he does not break his connection with the soil or change his nature and occupation as a peasant. On the one side there

is fraternity for war, and on the other side fraternity directed toward peace and optimism. But we cannot impose optimism as our standard. An ethical standard is not imposed; it must be conquered.

Points North

Morning of Life, by Kristmann Gudmundsson. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. \$2.50.

Salka Valka, by Halldor Laxness. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

Beyond Sing the Woods, by Trygve Gulbrandsen. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50.

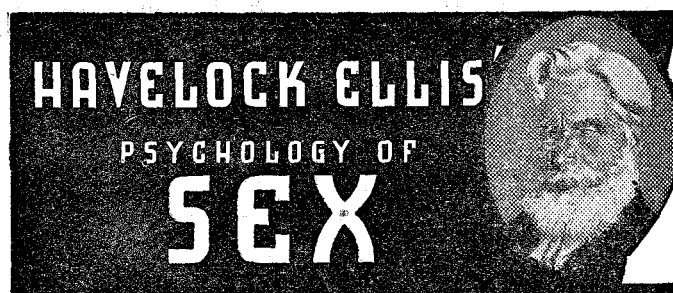
ICELAND forms a perfect setting for the romantic novel; its coasts are bleak; the life is hard and the earnings meager; there is still plenty of honor and glory to be had, and the individual can fight nature and the elements all day and all night if he wants to. In the romantic novel the characters are always extreme and opposite types; the fight is always between good and evil; heroes are strong and stern; heroines are delicate as rose-petals, and evil women are full of malignant passion.

"Morning of Life" sets out to describe such types but finds the burden too heavy. The book is far too short for its characters to appear in their true forms. The start is a favorable one; the abandoning of the mistress for the wife and the acute struggle between all parties are excellently drawn. But then comes a long jump in years; the book grows more disconnected and, though it remains readable throughout, its main theme is not developed at sufficient length. This is one of the few books that would be the better for another two hundred pages.

The author of "Salka Valka" has not played fair to the Scandinavian tradition by introducing such alien notes as a heroine who wears trousers, and a seamen's union. We are shown an Icelandic fishing village under the monopoly of one man: no money is circulated, each villager has an account at the monopolist's store (the *only* store) and all wages and spending function on a debit and credit system. The book is vigorously and clearly written: apart from its value as a novel—which is definitely high—it gives a first-class exposition of a system of credit and securities and, by introducing the Icelandic political and financial background, shows the tie existing between the isolated fishermen with their negligible credit at the local store and the collapse of the big banks in the capital city. A sharp, satirical note runs right through the book; the author has a little theme-song, "The Love of God Is Freely Given," that is sung at appropriate moments. This book is well worth reading and most exciting. Incidentally it shows well how a dictator-to-be employs Labor to help him on his way, and so describes the beginnings of National Socialism.

"Beyond Sing the Woods" skips safely back into the old romantic tradition; heroes and heroines assume their proper proportions again. The chief characters are Norwegian landowners, and the author has not handled them with much delicacy or restraint. The setting is fresh for the English-speaking public, but this is less on account of artistry than of geography. There have been so many novels written about proud, cold men who couple a fear of God with a deep contempt for mankind. It is this very archangelical quality that makes them become tedious before long. When we read in "Beyond Sing the Woods" that "far away at Borgland a proud lady was weeping salt, bitter tears . . ." we really feel that she is too far away for our sympathy to reach her.

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Mrs. Rinehart's Composure

The Doctor, by Mary Roberts Rinehart. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. \$2.

MRS. RINEHART'S story of a doctor's career is laid in a medium-sized industrial city in the period 1910-26; and its appeal lies in the fact that it "touches the autobiography" of so many of her readers. To Dr. Noel ("Chris") Arden, his work was reality and romance. Two women fall in love with him—Beverley Lewis, yesterday's Rich Girl, and Katie Walters, strange little half-soul, daughter in the shoddy household where he lives. The complications arising through Arden's iron security in his work, Beverley's naïveté and Katie's crassness and unscrupulousness occur as regularly as the tick of a metronome. They include a quarrel between Beverley and Chris, her marriage to a gay young blade, and his, rather incredibly, to Katie. After numerous years and calamities the two are reunited, their range of experience considerably increased, their capacity for living quite as before.

It is a typical Rinehart involved and realistic story, but not exactly a typical Rinehart popular novel. Its vivacity is a little absent-minded; and its implications as to the effects that codes of the time had on personality show a sympathy without that touch of graciousness from which Mrs. Rinehart suffered in the past. She does not admire the *noblesse oblige* attitude of Beverley and Arden which loosed the forces of self-destruction in their marriage partners, nor does she despise the immoral technique of Katie's efforts toward self-respect. The book is not integrated, but it is written from a composure more interesting than the author's former assurance. STELLA J. ROOF.

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Kagawa

Kagawa: An Apostle of Japan, by Margaret Baumann. New York: The Macmillan Company. 95 pages. \$1.

A Grain of Wheat, by Toyohiko Kagawa. Translated by Marion R. Draper, edited by Glenn Clark. New York: Harper and Brothers. 150 pages. \$1.

TOYOHICO KAGAWA has been called a proletarian saint. He is known as the outstanding Japanese Christian and pacifist, the founder of Japan's first labor union and the animator of its many cooperative movements. Miss Baumann's brief biography is chiefly concerned with him as Christian disciple. As selfless as any medieval saint, Kagawa took literally Christ's words about the rich man and the eye of the needle. Disowned by his Samurai family, he lived in the horrible slums of Shinkawa, sharing his home, his food and even his bed with those poorer than himself. He is partially blind today from a disease caught from a beggar who shared his pallet. But, unlike the Christian saints, the young Japanese student found nothing holy in poverty. He was in revolt against the slums and against the exploitation that creates them. In 1921 he led the strike of the dockworkers in Kobe and was imprisoned, but such was his hold on the masses that the government with unusual wisdom presently stopped persecuting him. In 1923 he was placed in charge of relief work after the great earthquake in Tokyo and later became adviser to the government on social and peasant problems. In this capacity he promoted many agricultural reforms, especially cooperation among the rural population. After Christianity the most important influence in his life has probably been that of the Danish agricultural cooperatives.

With Kagawa the saint, Miss Baumann's little book deals in a simple and moving fashion, but its brevity and oversimplified approach preclude an adequate treatment of his social ideas.

Western readers interested in these ideas will probably find Kagawa's widely heralded novel, "A Grain of Wheat," both puzzling and disappointing. On its face it is simply a Japanese Sunday-school book. Western radicals will be amused or irritated by its thesis that Communists are drunkards and bandits who come to a bad end without benefit of clergy (while the Christian converts get coöperation as well as religion). More disturbing is Kagawa's implication that a Japanese may be a devout Christian while serving in the Mikado's army, have time there for prayer and meditation, and so impress his superiors by these practices that he wins promotion. "Even if war is necessary," Kagawa makes his hero perceive, "there was a great need for a God of love in this world." But this God does not, apparently, interfere with army discipline or the authority of a possibly fascist state. The attempt to explain Kagawa's anti-communism on the ground of his objection to war and violence becomes much harder in the face of such reasoning.

It is possible that this Japanese best-seller does its author's ideas less than justice, or that it conveys a different message to an Oriental from what it does to a Western reader. One such reader cannot help wondering if Kagawa's literal Christianity may not in the end betray him to the reactionary forces to which his whole life has been a challenge.

MARTHA GRUENING.

Cure by Kindness

I Knew Them in Prison, by Mary B. Harris. New York: The Viking Press. 415 pages. \$3.

IN 1914 when Dr. Harris became, quite accidentally, superintendent of the workhouse at Blackwell's Island, "a model of what such an institution should not be," she was equipped with remarkable culture, rare personal qualities, total lack of experience and no intention of making penology her lifework. During two years she did whatever could be done under impossible conditions, to humanize the place. Afterwards she reorganized the New Jersey Reformatory for Women and the State Home for Girls, and directed the establishment of the Federal Industrial Institution for Women, a large farm tract in the mountains of West Virginia, of which she is now superintendent.

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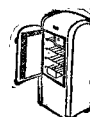


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